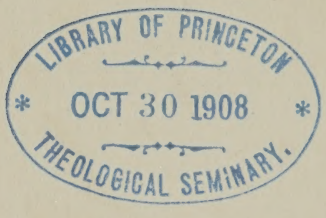
CATHOLICISM AND INDEPENDENCE

M. D. PETRE



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CATHOLICISM AND INDEPENDENCE

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BEING STUDIES IN SPIRITUAL LIBERTY

BY

M. D. PETRE

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
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PROLOGUE

THESE essays and articles were written at various times, and under the stress of various problems. If, as the writer hopes, they have one dominant note, one pervading and connecting thought, it is that of the right, the necessity, the duty of every mind to work out its own salvation by the courageous facing of its own difficulties, the resolute following of its own lights. Various reasons are given by the orthodox for the sad and frequent loss of faith which is to be witnessed in our days ; there is one which they never give, but which might frequently be given. For how many minds are taught to flee when they should stand firm in front of the foe, or what they deem to be the foe ? They are taught to distrust their own resources ; to doubt the power of their own mind to cope with the difficulties which itself has, at least in part, generated. They are told to close their eyes when they most need to open them ; to practise a passive obedience at the very moment

when they should exercise the highest activity. They are given a ready-made and lifeless answer to a spontaneous and living difficulty.

In some cases the method may be successful, or, at least, not deadly. The pressure of life and the rhythm of custom do what the actual treatment could not have effected ; they distract the soul from the difficulties which have never been answered, and at last she forgets that she ever had them.

But is this a satisfactory ending even if it be an easy one ? And then what of the soul that cannot forget ? The cupboard is closed, but she knows that the skeleton is within, and that it may emerge at any time to clothe itself with her own life. The day of reckoning may be deferred, but not put off for ever.

What we would advocate, therefore, however imperfectly, in these essays, is the exercise of a stronger not a weaker faith, a faith not presumptuous, but courageous even to audacity. To trust oneself is, in certain cases, to trust God, for if the light within be not from Him, then are we indeed " of all men most miserable."

We cannot live alone in soul any more than in body, and where many are joined together there must be common laws and a common govern-

ment. Hence there is a duty of obedience which must be loyally fulfilled in its own sphere, but there is another sphere into which that same duty cannot enter. To our own mental and moral conscience all doctrines and laws must make their last appeal, and we have a distinct as well as a corporate personality. If what we are told as truth be really true, it has nothing to fear from the lawful exercise of individual autonomy; there may be dark moments, but the light must ultimately prevail.

Let us trust to the goodness of our own cause, and not put it to shame in the falsely-assumed name of reverence and loyalty. If our faith be what it should be, if the Church be what we believe her to be, neither can be injured by honesty and truth. Fear may be the beginning of wisdom, but it is not its end, "for the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

CATHOLICISM AND INDEPENDENCE

THE TEMPERAMENT OF DOUBT

WE sometimes ask ourselves whether the many diseases which become gradually known to medical science are, for the most part, new as to their existence, or merely as to their recognition. We should probably find, after due examination, that the answer to such a question would be a qualified one, and that while much is now scientifically known which was formerly named from its effects rather than from its cause, there are also many developments of disease due to the peculiar circumstances and conditions of our present life. We might, perhaps, find individual cases, in the distant past, closely resembling those of our modern prevalent diseases, but investigation would probably show that certain symptoms are more widely spread and

common in one age, and others in another, and that there are forms of physical suffering corresponding with the particular mode of life of each century.

It is obvious that, unless medical science be quite lifeless, the ordinary laws of supply and demand must obtain here as elsewhere, and that both diagnosis and treatment must be developed in accordance with the actual physical condition of mankind. New symptoms must be observed and collated, new experiments must be made and new remedies tried, if any advance is to be made towards meeting the existing difficulties. It is true that we shall suffer during this process of evolution from the over-driven theories which arise in every field of thought and action, and that the most universally accepted remedy at some particular moment may not be the only one, or the best. Still, taking things all in all, we would most of us prefer, in case of sickness, to be treated by the leading physician of London or Paris, rather than by the equally great or greater intellect of Galen or Hippocrates; for not only has science advanced, but the physical constitution has likewise altered, in its process of adaptation to a more complex form of life.

Spiritual pathology is liable to at least as many variations and developments as its physical counterpart, and again we may ask, Are the symptoms new? or do we only know them better? Once more the answer will be a qualified one. We look to the pages of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, and we find in them the expression of much which we may have experienced in our own souls, or witnessed in those of others.

Still when we regard, not individual cases, but the face of the religious world as a whole, we see that here also different ages have had their prevailing characteristics, that their strength and their weakness have not been the same, and that, according to the prevailing need, there have arisen special methods of investigation and treatment. It is true that we may find our temptations, our trials, our hopes and fears, depicted in the spiritual struggles of men long passed away from the theatre of life; but the particular blend is special to the age, the general features are peculiar to the time. And as a new disease that suddenly appeared, and seized on whole populations, would at once draw to itself all the attention of medical science, until some means of succour was discovered, so any prevalent symptom of spiritual weakness surely deserves the same interest, and

claims the same open-minded study and diagnosis. We do not want to force influenza into some ancient category unless the place really fits it, and neither should we so act with a disease of the soul. We desire, on the contrary, to study its special characteristics, and to make use, in its treatment, not only of the experience of the past, but of all the light we can obtain in the present.

Now it is undeniable that a new symptom has been, for some time, rapidly spreading throughout the Christian world, and assuming an extent and importance which surely demand particular and careful investigation. The epidemic of doubt seizes on populations now where it only affected individuals in former ages, and assumes continually proportions of such magnitude as to give a special character to the religious constitution of our century.

The subject is such a wide one that it will be well at once to narrow the field of action by specifying, as distinctly as the nature of the question allows, the kind of doubt which is here under discussion. The word is used, in one sense, to depict our mental attitude towards certain theories, principles, facts, or fictions which we have never held, but are approaching for the sake of inquiry, or are simply relegating

to a half-way domain of opinion or uncertainty. Such doubt as this is rather that which precedes than that which follows on belief; it is not necessarily coupled with any sense of pain or loss; and the mind may be as calm in its questions and denials as in any other process of acquiring knowledge. It is not, therefore, with doubt such as this that we are occupied, but with that which consists in a disposition to question what we have hitherto believed.

And here again we must distinguish a doubt which is fully approved and accepted, which is received into the mind and seated in the place which faith had occupied, from that which is merely suggested, however vividly and forcibly —which batters at the door and burrows at the foundations, but which nevertheless keeps its character of invader, and is not yet admitted as conqueror or friend.

It is with this latter kind of doubt that we are here concerned. It arises in the soul where untroubled faith had hitherto existed, and brings with it an inevitable sense of suffering or loss. It is the sudden disappearance beneath the horizon of something which had been fully visible; it is the melting into shadow of something we had held as substance—we tighten our

grasp to find that our hands have closed on nothing; it is the violent withdrawal of the basis on which we thought ourselves securely settled, a withdrawal which seems to precipitate us into a chaos wherein all is shifting and uncertain; it is a metamorphosis in which things seem to change their relative size and position—what was great becomes small, what was near grows far, and we stagger amidst the shifting confusion, asking ourselves, Do we dream? or were we dreaming and are we now awake? or is it that all we look upon is a dream?

This state is no more like that of mere questioning and investigation than the doubt which might seize us as to the sincerity of an old friend is like the dispassionate criticism of a new one; or than the visionary's doubt as to the solidity of the earth on which he walks is like the questioning spirit in which we might receive the reported discovery of a new island. The doubt which precedes belief is not necessarily painful; the doubt which follows is like the freezing of a warm limb, the blinding of a sound eye.

But there is a class amongst those who pass through this ordeal of religious doubt who have to endure an added torture in a partly defined

sense of guilt, and fear of wilful wrong-doing. Among these are to be numbered all those who look upon their religious beliefs as a deposit for whose preservation they are personally responsible, and which to abandon is not only a loss but a sin. Amongst these latter we may count many to whom, in various ways, faith has become a duty of conscience; but, in a very special manner, those who hold themselves subject to the teaching of an infallible authority.

To such as these duty and truth appear to have parted company, and even duty seems to be imposed rather from without than by the inner moral sense. They suffer from a painful feeling of compulsion, as though they were called upon to profess what they do not believe, and to think what they do not mean. They have no wish to abandon the faith which they have hitherto cherished, and yet it seems to them that, were they true to themselves, they would have to do so, and that they are kept in it rather by outward compulsion than by inward conviction.

Some will say that they are suffering from their own pride; but even had this been the case before they were landed in the difficulty, it certainly is not so now, for the struggle is too vital to leave room for self-complacency.

It will be said again by others that they are the victims of passion, trying to free themselves from a creed that galls nature and checks self-indulgence. But such an accusation is utterly wide of the mark with those we are considering. They have no reason whatsoever for wishing not to believe, and they may even feel in themselves a strong desire to do so; but they have a haunting horror of not being loyal to their own lights, and they even distrust their very affection for the faith in which they have hitherto placed their confidence, as though it might lead them to disregard the call of truth. It is not pride then, nor is it immorality, nor is it even obstinacy which has brought about a state of soul in which they fear to lose their most precious possession.

It is at such a time that a strong helping hand is most urgently needed, but is, alas! often most grievously missing, for one of the features of the state is its apparent unapproachableness. Until we find some common basis intercourse between mind and mind is impossible. To say that such a state is wrong is rather to add extra suffering than to give help. That there may be, and sometimes is, guilt, we do not wish to deny; but it does not seem, all the

same, particularly helpful to say so just at the moment. To recommend the patient to make acts of faith is like advising him to dance on a broken leg by way of setting it; for even though the disease, like the seeming paralysis of hysterical patients, should be wholly inorganic, and rather of the nature of a fixed idea and constitutional weakness, still the powerlessness and anæsthesia actually exist, and are as effective for practical results as a genuine lesion. Nor does such treatment seem in accordance with the spirit of the prayer which so naturally suggests itself at such a time: "I believe, Lord, help thou my unbelief"; wherein the belief seems not to be in such full possession as to leave no margin uncovered.

Another mistake is in supposing that it is a question of answering certain difficulties. In the first place, what difficulties there are, are very subtle and elusive, and it may not be possible to answer them in any satisfactory manner. And, in the second place, as Cardinal Newman said that no number of difficulties made one doubt, so might we reverse the statement, and add that neither do many doubts constitute one difficulty, for it is a curious psychological fact that we cannot usually ascribe the condition we have

depicted to any definite intellectual difficulty. It may be that many are acting confusedly together, or that one in particular, which suddenly gripped the mind, has been the point from which the trouble started ; but the state in which we find ourselves is not that of definite difficulty, but of general uncertainty ; so much so that we have no very keen inclination to seek answers to positive questions, since no one of them seems sufficiently to represent our need.

It would be distinctly a mistake to deny, on the strength of this, that those liable to this trial are, for the most part, men whose minds turn naturally to intellectual problems ; whereas those who have not an analytical cast of mind remain often entirely free from them. Up to a certain point doubts and difficulties are closely connected, and, as we have said, some one especially intense difficulty, whether scientific, philosophical, or critical, may be the distinct origin in some minds of an acute crisis of doubt. But even here we should distinguish the thing itself from its causes, remote or immediate, and recognize their difference of character.

There was a time when men rejoiced in subtle religious difficulties, but that was not a period in which doubt was very widespread or vigorous ;

whereas just at present difficulties are not a pleasure but a pain, and this not from want of energy to cope with them, but because we dread the ghost that stalks behind, the doubt that lays its withering hand upon the soul at the very moment when it needs all its strength to grapple with a dangerous antagonist.

Modern thinkers, who are free from the sectarian spirit, and who have width of mind to enter into the thought of past schools in the manner in which they expect that others should enter into theirs, will grant that, in the *Summa* of St. Thomas for instance, many of the countless difficulties raised are closely akin to those of our own day. The answers may often appear to us unsatisfactory, though, with regard to a good number, it is hard even now to see what better could be said, if we interpret them in a liberal and sympathetic sense. But if we still feel, even after acknowledging this much, that our minds remain persistently dissatisfied, may it not be precisely that, in those pages, we have the expression of the difficulties of an age which had not many doubts, and that therefore both question and solution are somewhat lifeless to us?

A difficulty, pure and simple, is, in fact, a

conundrum or problem which torments us as long as we look at it, which may haunt us if our minds grow tired and have not the power of shaking it off; but which, nevertheless, remains partly external so long as it has no direct connexion with our life and its interests. But, once this more personal element enters, the difficulty has given way to doubt, and the outcome must effect in our lives a change of which difficulties in themselves could never be the direct cause, however much they might lead to it. A difficulty may be the same for you and me; a doubt is my own. It is a personal individual matter, affecting my relations, moral and intellectual, to certain facts or doctrines. It is a narrowing of the field of assent, a limiting of the personal perception as regards some objects which were formerly within its range.

We may wonder sometimes why it was that, in the Middle Ages, difficulties so seldom produced doubts; and the more so when we see how little there was often, in the moral demeanour of certain ages, to support faith, if intellectual conviction should waver. How did our ancestors contrive to

> Believe—and yet lie, kill, rob, fornicate,
> Full in belief's face?

Were *we* to try the experiment the basis of our faith would rot beneath us, and leave us as men are left nowadays who think to preserve belief without practice.

It is not possible now, but it was possible then, in the first place because of the surrounding atmosphere, which maintained a certain cast of thought even in those who did little to foster it; in the second place because they were fronted by a great concrete reality, which won and retained their assent, little as they understood the grounds on which they gave it.

The Church of the Middle Ages was that concrete reality. In the midst of a wild, half-civilized world she was—whatever corruption may have existed within her—the one sole guardian of justice and purity, the one sole teacher of religious truth. She was imposing and powerful from every point of view, and even her worldly dignity had no small influence in subduing the minds of those who were not occupied with philosophical problems, but needed a living object of allegiance. The deeper and more spiritual faith of men of pure and holy lives was such then as it must be in all times, based on invisible realities, and not on outward power and show; but the mass of half-hearted worshippers

and believers, who are to be found at all periods of the history of the Church, were propped and preserved in those days, not by the merits of their own faith, but by the unity which prevailed around them, and the external majesty of that Church whose spiritual grandeur they could never have understood.

Just the reasons, then, why doubt was so comparatively rare in the Middle Ages will furnish us with the explanation of its prevalence now. Those who do not care for their faith can no longer live, like parasites, on the belief of others; neither can they find the same external support in a sovereign shorn of a great part of her outward magnificence. The Church cannot, in fact, look great to them through the eyes of others if their own sight is defective; they must see for themselves or not at all.

It is easier to meet a danger if we know beforehand that it is one we have every reason to expect, and this seems the case as regards doubt in the present condition of the world. If faith has become, much more than it was before, a question of personal effort and perception, it is obvious that those who trust too much to habit and surroundings are liable to be lost. And, in fact, it will happen that just those whose instincts

are too spiritual to be satisfied with the outside of religion will be the ones called upon to pass through the most severe crisis.

Doubt is of a nature so subtle and evasive that it may be despised, by the ignorant, for its shifting and uncertain character. But uniformity is not in itself a sign of life, and it should surely rouse us to careful consideration when we see that it attacks often, not those who think little on religious subjects, but those who think much, and, in its acute stages, inflicts an amount of mental pain which is a sure sign that the soul beneath is living and not dead.

It is true indeed that, with some, faith falls off like the skin of a serpent, that is worn out and dead—or it is lost, in the way we have indicated, from the want of support amongst those around. But these cases have in them as much of indifference as of doubt, which latter is, on the contrary, sometimes the straining and cracking of a rope on which a weight is suddenly thrown. Why should it cause us any misgivings while we just hold it loosely in the hand? But all our weight is suspended upon it, every fibre is drawn to its full tension; it quivers and groans, and can we help asking ourselves, "Will it bear?"

Are we for this more reprehensible than those

who have never trusted their whole welfare to the rope, and have consequently not had such overwhelming anxiety as to its security? It has been one of the many strands that bore up their lives, but they have not attempted to make it the only or the principal one. They have cared for their belief sufficiently not to lose it from sheer indifference like that other class to whom we have previously referred; but they have also kept it in too limited proportions to suffer the trials incidental to those to whom religion is all or nothing. They have not the unifying instinct which is at once the privilege and the penalty of those other souls.

Difficult as it may be of understanding to those cast in another mould, we must nevertheless recognize the fact that some minds are divided into separate compartments, with little communication between them. Some there must be, or identity would be lost, but the owner of the premises seems rather like a housekeeper who presides over a good many cupboards, filled with entirely different stores. One cupboard contains jam, and another soap; the only connexion between the two is that they are under the dominion of one person, who can dispose of either.

Thus we find a mind which is divided into separate compartments, one of which contains science, a second commerce, a third religion. It is, in fact, one intellect and one will that make use of all and each, but they are in no way blended; and the same man will consequently astonish us by the calm facility with which he will pursue the call of business or science, and at the same time carry on the duties of religion, on lines apparently incompatible with one another.

Now such natures as these will not be easily troubled by doubts and difficulties. Since the wares are quite separate, there is not the trouble of co-ordinating them, and it is in this latter process that anxiety is likely to arise.

Hence we see that it is the *religious mind* that is more liable to suffering of the kind we have described; and, by a religious mind, we mean not necessarily the mind of the man who is a priest or religious by profession, nor of one who consecrates more than the average time to religious exercises of any kind, but the mind that is cast in a religious mould, into which everything else enters or struggles to enter.

It would, of course, be an evident exaggeration to assume the converse of this opinion, and

maintain that, since those who suffer from the attacks of doubt are often of deeply religious minds, that therefore the religious minded will always be subject to this trial. Many other causes intervene in the matter, the prevailing atmosphere may be contrary, the temperament may not be liable to that disease. But what we desire to indicate is that one of the classes of men who, as exempt from this trial, might be tempted to blame those subject to it, are not in fact exempt by reason of their more but of their less religious cast of mind.

The question of moral responsibility in doubt is one which will be differently viewed according to the theories tacitly or explicitly held as to the genesis of faith. While all religious and believing minds are agreed that doubt is an evil, and sometimes a sin, the part of the will still remains a very undefined one, and opposite schools will perplex one another by using the same word in a different sense, and with still more different emphasis. While all agree as to the duty of accepting a revelation which we believe to come from God, and the necessity of guarding a faith which we once possess, and not exposing it deliberately to injury and loss, the moral element, in both its first acceptance

and subsequent preservation, is very differently represented according to the different line of thought which has been followed from the starting-point of discussion.

To some faith is like the light of day, visible to all those who, having eyes, do not deliberately shut them ; and doubt is like the blindness of Nelson, when he applied the telescope to his sightless eye and professed that he could not see. They look upon the will as a kind of scene-shifter, whose part it is to draw back the curtain from before the intellectual vision, and which sometimes perversely refuses to do so. They do not allow it any power or influence over the visual faculty itself, but only over its actual exercise. The spectacle, they think, would be the same for all, if all would open their eyes to it, only some do not.

They agree with a very opposite school, that doubt is a sickness ; but they do not therefrom conclude that the whole constitution must require treatment. They are rather disposed to say that, since it is a state of soul, it can be got into and out of by an immediate act of the will. But the result of this attempt is so often a failure that it should surely teach us to look further back, and seek a more remote and

general cause. In the words of a profound French thinker :—

"On se contente ordinairement de dire que le scepticisme est une maladie, et qu'il est absurde parce qu'il implique contradiction. Je n'en disconviens pas. Mais n'est-il pas étrange tout d'abord qu'une contradiction puisse être vécue en quelque sorte et se réaliser dans une âme ? Les impossibilités de la logique abstraite ne sont-elles donc que des fictions ? En tout cas il apparaît bien que la vie réelle s'en joue et n'est point arrêtée par elle. En logique une contradiction c'est l'impossible. A ce titre le scepticisme ne devait pas pouvoir se produire. Et c'est toujours en effet ce qu'on s'efforce de démontrer, et bien inutilement, puisque le scepticisme se produit quand même. Il faudrait comprendre enfin que c'est un état d'âme, et le considérer comme tel. Et si c'est une maladie il est nécessaire, pour l'éviter, et pour essayer au moins de la guérir, d'en connaître l'origine et la nature. Quand on est en présence d'un mal et qu'on veut le supprimer, ce n'est pas directement au mal lui-même qu'on s'attaque, mais à sa cause" (*Le Dogmatisme Moral*, par L. Laberthonnière).

Our mental mechanism is complicated beyond

all our psychological knowledge, and it is not surprising that, knowing as little as we do of the origin of our beliefs and opinions, we are bewildered to account for any change that may arise. And explanations are not growing easier now that attention is being turned to what are called subconscious phenomena, and that we are discovering a hitherto more or less unrecognized substratum of our intellectual existence. We see how what was thought to be forgotten is simply stored in some corner, which is inaccessible for the moment to the acting personality, though it may be reached by another ; and that actions, apparently irrational, are directed by some hidden motive of which the mind itself cannot give an account.

The Prometheus of Goethe when asked by his brother—

> "What then is truly thine own?"

replies—

> "The round which mine activity fills,
> Nothing under and nothing over."

Prometheus recognized nothing in the shape of automatic actions ; to him life was personal activity or nothing.

To men in general this cannot be so. We must have our cellars, and our underground

pipes and machinery, for a large part of the routine of existence. But the misfortune is that too many relegate what should be the most conscious and active part of their lives to this underground domain, where it gradually rusts from insufficient use, and proves unfit when the critical moment arises.

In a crisis of faith this will often be the case. Our belief began by our own personal act; from this was generated a habit, which, far from being of automatic nature, is nothing else but an increased readiness for action. But as the active can become the habitual, so also the habitual can become the automatic; and whereas the habit begets a facility for action, automatism is the decay of the habit. By our act we make a thing our own, by our habit we keep it latent as part of our personality; by automatic use we let it finally drop out of the circle of consciousness like an anæsthetic limb, which seems a part of us to others, but hardly to ourselves who have no consciousness of it. According to the activity exercised will habits remain living, according to the indifference and absence of personal effort will they become automatic.

There is in our nature an undeniable tendency to take undue advantage of the facility generated

by mechanical movement. It is an obvious saving of time and trouble to use a ready reckoner instead of working out our own sums, and life would be impossible if we set out to verify all the ready-made conclusions of others of which we make use in our daily routine. But whereas the automatic element will not harm us much in practical life, wherein the pressure of new circumstances constantly calls for fresh personal effort, preventing the man from becoming a machine, it is quite otherwise in a realm where there is more complete personal autonomy, and where progress and perfection depend wholly on free personal action. We shall be forced, by external influences, to take measures as to our clothes and food, but not as to our faith and inward conduct.

And now we see how, in seeking facilities, we are sometimes preparing future difficulties, and in what sense the homely saying, "The nearer the church the further from God," may have a deep psychological meaning. In our anxiety to form a durable habit, we sometimes overstep the bounds and produce a mechanical instead of a living faith. Such a faith as this rests easily in formulas, and finds few difficulties because of the very limitation of its view. It lasts as long

as no new effort is needed, but, should such be required, it is as unready for the crisis as a steam-plough is unfit to jump a hedge which bars its progress. If it endures it will be by reason of its limitations, because it has fitted eternal truths to the capacity of the understanding, and they will not therefore startle it by a sudden and new aspect of their immensity. But the fear is that it will not last, because new habits are in continual formation, and when faith has slipped back more and more into the automatic region it may be at last completely ousted by that which is more living and personal. And it is to be remembered that whatever shock of doubt arises is as likely to come from more vivid spiritual perception as from worldliness and religious indifference.

Dr. Pierre Janet, in his work *Les Stigmates Mentaux de l'Hystérie*, gives us a striking parallel of this process in his description of the anæsthesia and limited field of vision of hysterical patients. By degrees what is not attended to becomes imperceptible ; the limb which is neglected ceases to feel, the eye no longer sees that which has become indifferent to the whole personality. One patient sees nothing outside a limited visual circle except it be a mouse,

which, having caused a mental shock, and absorbed an undue amount of personal perception, is visible where nothing else would be. We are all of us, in some respects, like hysterical patients; we perceive what interests us and nothing more; and this not by reason of wilful self-deception, but of the natural failing of attention where the personality is not concerned.

Now some of the details of life regard the whole personality very little, and, for such as these, localized, automatic habit is useful and convenient; it is easier, e.g., to dress automatically than by a new personal effort each time. But faith and religion are nothing unless they regard the whole moral and intelligent being; unless they are at each instant *mine*, they become mere machinery, and mechanism *per se* has no place in the spiritual world.

All this will help us to understand why an automatic belief sometimes lasts and appears sufficient for the purposes of life, while in other cases it leads up to a crisis, ending in negation or a new and living faith. So long as religion is treated as a mere acquisition and accessory it needs but a compartment, like any other mental possession, and can remain as long as nothing comes to disturb it. But should the cupboard

be required for something else, it is turned out without much difficulty, and the crisis (if, indeed, it deserve such a name) ends in mere negation ; where we believed, we have ceased to do so. But, in the contrary event, it is not the intrusion of something else that ousts the last remains of faith, but quite the opposite, viz., a new and personal perception of spiritual realities, which extinguishes the more formal one, and faith is only dying in the sense that it is being renewed, that sensation is returning to an anæsthetic limb, and that what was on the very outskirts of the being is becoming conscious and personal.

Now one of the dangers during this crisis is that, whereas it is the moment for a strong individual effort, which will transform all the spiritual situation, it too often presents itself to the sufferer, or is presented to him, as a time in which, more than ever, belief must be crystallized into a formula, which the mind must passively accept. As regards external conduct this may be the only right method of procedure, but as regards the soul itself it would be to perpetuate the automatic condition instead of revivifying it.

The state of things has, in fact, arisen from faith being taken as part of the furniture of the

soul instead of a prevailing disposition of the whole, and we must not fall into the mistake of doctoring one limb when it is the whole constitution that is at fault. Even if we can get our patient to say "I believe," we have not effected a cure, unless in those words he expresses a personal and not an automatic act. He needs to be brought into living relations with a reality, and the religious attitude will do more than intellectual conviction.

With many believers, alas! the creed, as professed by the tongue and held by the mind, is far in advance of that which dwells in the will and heart; they believe more than they love. With these others, on the contrary, the moral hold is often far stronger than the intellectual. It brings us round to the old controversy, must we love to understand, or understand to love? But, however this may be, the appeal in doubt will generally be more successful if made to the heart than the head; an act of love will do more than an act of faith.

"Yes; but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"[1] It is easy to be certain of what we hold in our hands, and can measure with a piece of tape; it is easier still to

[1] *Andrea del Sarto.* Robert Browning.

be certain of what we hold in our minds in a similar manner. But when we suddenly feel a reality expand beyond our hold and vision, then, in our struggle to reach, we may lose our grasp, and be landed in a crisis of doubt.

It is the veil of our own dulness that saves us from utter madness, as Oliver Wendell Holmes acutely remarks. The least thing that grows is too much for our understanding, and can make us giddy if we look at it or think of it with too much concentration. How much more with that which is spiritual and infinite!

It is the slenderness, the formality of our previous knowledge that causes us the shock when we discover that things are other than we thought them. We find that our horizon is not wide enough to embrace all that has come within it, that the picture is too large for the frame. What we have to do is to spiritualize the truths we had regarded under too material an aspect, to let the breath of eternity blow on what was too limited and temporal. And it is in this way that we shall find room in our spiritual world for those other realities, scientific and material, which have sometimes so disturbing an influence on faith. The Church must be to us a thing of spiritual, not material beauty, and then we shall

not be troubled at finding that, if everlastingly beautiful, she may also be temporarily black.

And, most of all, must we cling to the assurance that it can never be a question of choice between our faith and our truth, that there can never be an obligation for us to accept a belief unless that obligation arise from our fundamental conviction of its truth. But for this we must learn to develop more and more in our religious being that sense of mystery which is of the essence of life's probation.

> Pure faith indeed—you know not what you ask.
> Naked belief in God the Omnipotent,
> Omniscient, Omnipresent, sears too much
> The sense of conscious creatures to be borne.
> It were the seeing Him, no flesh shall dare.
> Some think, Creation's meant to show Him forth.
> I say, it's meant to hide Him all it can,
> And that's what all the blessed Evil's for.
> Its use in time is to environ us,
> Our breath, our drop of dew, with shield enough
> Against that sight till we can bear its stress.
> Under a vertical sun the exposed brain,
> And lidless eye, and disemprisoned heart,
> Less certainly would wither up at once
> Than mind, confronted with the truth of Him.
> But time and earth case-harden us to live;
> The feeblest sense is trusted most; the child
> Feels God a moment, ichors o'er the place,

Plays on and grows to be a man like us.
With me, faith means perpetual unbelief
Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot,
Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.[1]

But let us instead of calling the snake "unbelief," name it "mystery," and surely we shall have a temper of mind which will combine loyal adherence to our faith with unswerving attachment to truth.

Because we feel the snake we know that we believe, and, because he stirs beneath our touch, we know that our faith has the fulness and possibilities of life, and is not a stereotyped formula.

The spiritual world is the "forest primæval" into which we all are born. There is light enough for us just to distinguish the outline of the trees, but not so much that we cannot at times take them for ghosts. Still, the light that glimmers through them is the light by which alone we can walk and guide our steps so as not to stumble or fall; the air that blows through them is the very breath of our lives, without which we must die. If it is true then that all can become an unreality to us, let us remember that we then become an unreality to ourselves also, and that we know our own personality in so far as we recognize the

[1] *Bishop Blougram's Apology.* Robert Browning.

being of that which is around us. It is hopeless to ask for an irresistible answer to all doubts, but we know that our own existence is wider or more limited in proportion to the elevation of our belief. We have then to hold to our sense of right and wrong, which may be likened to our sense of touch, when our faith, which is our sense of sight, grows dim; and it is not stranger to appeal from one spiritual sense to another, than from one physical perception to another, which is what we do when we come and touch the tree to find out if it is a substance or a ghost.

There are times when we are left with the most rudimentary knowledge of God, as drawn from the faint sound of His voice in conscience, saying, "Do this"—"Do not that." To try to see and know more, at such times, is like endeavouring to distinguish the shape and colour of the tree on a dark night when we can barely distinguish its outline. It is better to clasp the trunk, and wait for the light of day. It is a time when, instead of knowing the invisible through the visible, God chooses rather to reverse the process, and make only Himself known and felt, and the rest but guessed at. But the more we have learned to recognize the deep

pervading mystery of all that lies around us, the better shall we endure these periods of denser obscurity, and we shall not fear that what was there is there no longer when we cannot see it, any more than we disbelieve in the world around us when the sun sets and leaves it all in darkness. The Spirit of God is brooding on the face of the waters, and at the word "Fiat lux," the mountains and trees will emerge, not greater nor more real, but only more visible than they were before.

OBEDIENCE SPIRITUAL AND NOT MILITARY[1]

IT is one of the tragedies of life that so much heroism and self-sacrifice are wasted on unworthy causes, and yet it is also a question whether we would not rather have such qualities wasted than extinguished, which latter would often be their fate were it not for the existence of a certain amount of generous illusion. Is it not sometimes better to be unreasonably heroic and unselfish than to live a life of mediocre virtue under conditions of mediocre happiness? Even an unworthy cause will often call forth high qualities, which might slumber for ever in a more commonplace and contented existence.

So that it is not all matter for regret if soldiers have sometimes been sacrificed, whether in earthly or spiritual warfare, to the mistaken commands of ignorant or selfish commanders. If they were nobler than the ostensible cause for which they died, it may still be said that their real cause

[1] Written for publication in 1905, but delayed by circumstances.

was in the dictates of their own conscience, and that they thus lived and died for a worthy end ; an end far greater than that which their rulers placed before them.

But there are other victims of obedience and loyalty whose case is far more painful and complicated. The former enjoy at least that happiness which comes from a simple, childlike confidence in the justice of all that is commanded them ; these latter have received the more fatal gift of seeing for themselves and suffering accordingly. Then comes the conflict between the loyalty which they owe to the common cause, and the loyalty which they owe to the light within. It is not a contest, as might superficially be supposed, between public and private duty ; it is a conflict between the obedience due to the call of visible and that of invisible authority ; this latter, be it remembered, unsupported by those definite proofs and precedents which the other can allege.

A cheap and easy answer to this difficulty is that the risks incidental to such departures from the common law are so grave that it is far better to make a complete holocaust of personality in the interests of the general good. But this is to suppose that the general good must also be

the immediate good, and not something vaster and more remote which only a few can apprehend. It is not by a common movement that advance is usually made. When men have not learnt to *obey*, they have not learnt the great lesson of unselfishness and subjection to the general good. And yet if they have not also learnt, under legitimate circumstances, to *disobey*, they may be useful, indeed, as units in a multitude, but not as personal factors. Is there then no way in which the self-sacrifice of the private soldier may be transformed into the still nobler self-sacrifice of the inspired leader? in which the duty of obedience may be as generously transcended as it has, previously, been accepted and fulfilled?

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An old book will sometimes acquire a quite new importance from its bearing, direct or indirect, on a new problem, or from the occurrence of fresh circumstances, in which its teaching becomes applicable. There is a little classical French volume, not much known, perhaps, to the English reader, but which, coming lately under the notice of the present writer, seemed strangely opportune to our own day. The book

is by Alfred de Vigny, entitled *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires*, and deals with the army problem from the point of view of military discipline and obedience. The French soldier, of the epoch immediately following the wars of Napoleon and the Restoration, is put before us in his strength and his weakness, his greatness and his abjection. The older men had known the troubled days of the First Republic, and the swift, glorious years that followed, when they passed from victory to victory under the guidance of the great general. The younger ones had lived on these traditions, and inherited the enthusiasm, if not all the other qualities, of the type.

We behold him then, the veteran of the "Grande Armée," a hero in the fulfilment of duty, a saint in detachment and abnegation and obedience, but a child in understanding and initiative, and rather a machine than a man in the conduct of his own life. At the bidding of authority he sacrifices comfort and happiness, his dearest family affections, his tenderest friendships ; but he sacrifices, too, the very principles of humanity and justice, slaying the innocent at the command of an iniquitous government which had forced itself into authority without any will or consent on his own part. As we

consider the types and histories placed before us we are uncertain whether to rejoice or to grieve —to rejoice at the utter selflessness and nobility of such men, or to grieve that their devotion was wasted in such a cause ; that, through heroic abnegation, the unselfish were made the tools of the selfish, the generous of the cunning and unscrupulous ; that Napoleon's soldiers were the implements of Napoleon's scheming tyranny, and the soldiers of the First Republic weapons for the carrying out of the cruel orders of wicked and irresponsible rulers. The more perfect the instrument the more terrible the havoc which results, when the hand that wields it is violent and unjust. All the genius of Bonaparte would not have sufficed to upset the geography of Europe and drench its nations in blood had he not been served by men who sacrificed body and soul to the fulfilment of his every wish. His gigantic selfishness would have been frustrated had it not been grounded on the unselfishness of an entire army. So too with the action of how many other authorities, whether personal or corporate! How often is the noblest sacrifice made at the bidding of an unworthy master for the sake of an unworthy cause! Is it right that the pure intention should be made

use of for the accomplishment of the wicked end? that some men should die noble deaths in order that others may live base lives?

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The same problem is confronting us at present in quite another order of things, and the advantages of military obedience are being silently tested and questioned, in matters ecclesiastical and religious, as De Vigny questions them in those things which pertain to the Army and the State. For it cannot be deemed an exaggeration if we qualify as *military* the kind of obedience which has become largely prevalent in the Catholic Church. Many of us have been brought up with a notion of spiritual deference and submission which would lead us to condemn as disloyal any questioning of the decrees of superiors, and to avoid anything in the nature of independent, personal initiative. This rigid conception of our duty as subjects will allow of the rightfulness of representations, respectfully made when authority is willing to listen, but respectfully withdrawn when authority imposes silence. The subject may defend himself and others within certain limits, but, like a true soldier, he must die fighting, even with his own personal friends,

should his captain send him forth to such a battle. He must defend forts that he knows to be tottering to destruction from underground mines; he must put forth in battleships that he knows to be rotten and unseaworthy; he must shoot the innocent, and even the deserving, if his commanders bid him do so; and he must start on his campaign, as many an actual soldier, to our shame, has done, knowing that the provisions are inadequate, the clothing insufficient, and the remedies useless for the climate he has to face.

To the French soldier, so beautifully described by our author, all this has been made endurable by the instinct of *honour*.

"Ce n'est pas une foi neuve, un culte de nouvelle invention, une pensée confuse, c'est un sentiment né avec nous et dans nous, indépendant des temps, des lieux, et même des religions; un sentiment fier, inflexible; un instinct d'une incomparable beauté, qui n'a trouvé que dans les temps modernes un nom digne de lui, mais qui déjà produisait de sublimes grandeurs dans l'antiquité, et la fécondait comme ces beaux fleuves qui, dans leurs source et leurs premiers détours, n'ont pas encore d'appellation. Cette foi, qui me semble rester à tous encore et régner en souveraine dans les armées, est celle de

l'honneur" (*Servitude et Grandeur Militaires*, p. 284. Alfred de Vigny).

To the soldier of the Church the motive, a similar one, though more spiritual and also more unselfish, is *loyalty*—an abandonment of heart and judgment and will to what he regards as the highest and holiest authority existent. By hostile and unjust critics it may sometimes be regarded as servility, as cowardliness, as vile subjection in the interests of mere personal safety. But, however such accusations may be deserved in a few cases, the type we have in mind is as certainly above them as it is certainly a type that is actually, and not unfrequently, to be found. It were as preposterous to call such men slaves and cowards because they give up all in the cause of obedience, as to apply such epithets to the soldier perishing on the battle-field for a cause which is not his own. Be our convictions what they may, be we Protestant or Catholic or atheist, we cannot, unless by sheer prejudice, withhold a certain admiration for such men, even if we regard their sacrifice as useless and vain.

Compare, for instance, their lives with the low commonplace existence of those who have never kindled for any cause but their own—and such,

alas! is the type of a large portion of mankind. Even though the soldier soul may have been cramped in its individual development, it has still a freshness and a nobility which may shame the lesser ones of earth, whose ambition is limited to what is personally advantageous. For devotion to any cause, not our own, implies faith and abandonment, with the generosity which these demand. Even though the cause were meaner than the victim had conceived it, it is still as something greater and other than self that he understands it, and thus enters into a larger and fuller life.

A man has no right to call himself a cosmopolitan and sacrifice his country to the world until he has learned to sacrifice himself to his country. The first call on our devotedness is to that cause which more immediately confronts us —having done our duty in the lesser sphere, having subordinated our particular interests to the more general ones, we can pass on to sacrifice these latter to others still greater. Some men are so occupied with the limitations of every human cause that they forget their own, and, having refused to abandon their private interests for an end which they deemed inadequate, they will be found at last not to have sacrificed them

at all, but, thinking nothing great enough to satisfy their ambition, they remain enclosed in the narrowest circle of all—that of private selfishness and convenience. They devote themselves in intention, but never in act, and they fail to reach the field of higher aim and effort because they have not passed through that which intervenes. It is good to obey God rather than man ; but God, as He exists in our own narrow minds, is more easily managed than the neighbour who stands outside and puts forth his personality in a manner too objective to be overlooked. The will of our Creator can be falsely identified with our own will, and no voice will come from the clouds to justify God and proclaim the deceit. But our neighbour will promptly correct us if we make such a mistake in his case. We cannot have our own way in human institutions, and pretend it is the will of the majority that we are following. Hence, in all things, our first call to self-sacrifice is in the fulfilment of those duties which immediately confront us, and only through them do we enter on further and wider ones, to which the former must be subservient.

But some will go on from this to maintain a much more unqualified doctrine, and to assert that obedience never admits of exception. To

weaken, ever so little, the obligation of prompt and entire submission is to raise a grave and insoluble problem. The monk, the jesuit, the faithful layman, must, like the true soldier, obey literally *unto death*, careless of every kind of private disadvantage, careless even of the sufferings of others, so that authority be respected in word and act. If we see evils that need reform, if our own souls be cramped and if the souls of our brethren be perishing for lack of the remedy which we could provide, then we may indeed, meekly and dutifully, point out the need to ecclesiastical superiors—ask for help—protest against abuses—but remain all the while disposed to continue as before if superiors should not think fit to relent; disposed, that is, to encourage those very evils against which, individually, our judgment rebels.

Our French writer deals with the same problem in his own subject.

"Je ne me dissimule point," he says, "que c'est là une question d'une extrême difficulté, et qui touche à la base même de toute discipline. Loin de vouloir affaiblir cette discipline, je pense qu'elle a besoin d'être corroborée sur beaucoup de points parmi nous, et que, devant l'ennemi, les lois ne peuvent être trop draconiennes" (p. 85).

"Devant l'ennemi": here are significant words, and we may truly say that, in spiritual matters too, discipline must never be relaxed "before the enemy." It must not be from any coward yielding to the fashion of the day, to the opinions of a carnal-minded world, to the pleadings of self-indulgence, that the Christian knight must waver in his allegiance to his commanders. But, on the other hand, it would be begging the very question in point to regard as an enemy every force that opposes the powers that be. Spiritual friends and enemies are not so plainly distinguishable as political ones, and the worst enemies of the Church have not always been those who were battering at her walls, but rather those who were sapping them from within. And, again, it must be admitted that, in spiritual and in ecclesiastical matters, reform has rarely come from above, nor has it indeed often come from within, but rather from outside, in the form of attack and persecution. Are we then to say that the Church can never be saved except by the wrongful attacks of those without, or the wrongful rebellion of those within? Are we to garner the fruit of reform and liberty and spiritual renovation, and dispatch to hell those who earned them for us? Is all the loss to be

on the side of the reformer ; all the gain on the side of the reformed ?

It will be urged, as against this, that there have been reformers who lived and died in the bosom of the Church ; who never set themselves in opposition to any positive decree of authority ; whose methods were wholly constitutional. Take the case of St. Catherine of Sienna, who spoke the truth to popes and was largely instrumental in effecting a great political change within the Church. Take another woman saint, Theresa, who won her rightful recognition against all the narrow and conservative powers that beset her, and who yet professed herself ready to die for a single rubric.

These cases have their value as examples of constitutional agitation, but they cannot be made to answer our difficulty. In the first place, we may ask if St. Catherine of Sienna really succeeded in her mission, which was a far more ambitious one than the removal of the popes from Avignon to Rome. In the second place, there are reforms so fundamental, so structural, that it is almost impossible to hope that they can be achieved with the consent, or even the silence, of the reigning authorities. In such cases the reformer must carry out his mission even to the

point of a breach of discipline, or must abandon it altogether; no half measures are possible. Now the question is, which is best? Are we to risk the grave dangers which ensue when the way is once opened to insubordination, however solemn its justification, or are we not rather to accept any condition of things, even the most unsatisfactory, rather than accomplish our end by the way of revolt? Will not God Himself save the Church through our obedience? And is it not our want of faith which urges us to trust to human means in defiance of divinely constituted authority? Shall we not perish nobly in a futile cause rather than break through the bonds of discipline for however high an end? And, still more, how is the crowd to be ruled if the principle of exceptions be once introduced? Will not every man deem himself justified in breaking bounds so soon as he perceives the least evil calling for reform—to the manifest destruction of the entire authority and unity of the Church?

These are grave objections—unanswerable ones, up to a certain point—and yet the still graver difficulty remains: What if all the more constitutional means of reform are lacking or inadequate? Is the Church to be delivered over to her enemies because her friends cannot save

her? Are we to fight those forces which make for her salvation because we are ordered to do so by those who misapprehend the entire situation? Are we to stifle our own highest aspirations, and oppress those of others, at the bidding of what we deem to be mistaken authority? Is it better to die in what we know to be the wrong cause than to live in the right one?

Let us admit, first of all, that the difficulty as to the ruling of exceptions is one which must, of its very nature, remain unanswerable. No legislator, however enlightened, can possibly lay down the cases in which a departure may be made from the ordinary obligations. Any one transcending the recognized boundaries is beyond the pale of judgment until time has shown the result of his action. It is one of the many cases in which the criterion of law is an inadequate one. If we want to be *sure*, both in our own judgment and that of others, that we are *right*, then let us stay within the recognized landmarks—for outside them our ordinary tests are inadequate. If God calls any man to the task of reform, He will give him the heart that is strong enough to brave loneliness and uncertainty and the terrors of unexplored night and darkness. He will give him strength to lose his own soul, trusting that,

in God, he shall find it again. But in this very risk lies also his justification, so far as he can have one. To him who truly realizes that he is risking all, even to being anathema for his brethren's sake, there is not much danger of wandering from the fold for a selfish and unworthy motive. It is easy to be liberal on the subjects about which we care little, but it is hard when we care much. Freedom to go hither and thither is sweet so long as the whole world is indifferent to us; but, once we have been fenced round with the endearments of home, it is hard to wander forth in doubt as to whether we shall ever return. The "free lance" in religious warfare can never experience this agony, and is consequently never truly fitted for the task of reform. Like the social demagogue, who has no vested interests in the country, his hand will be heavy and ruthless, and unfitted for the delicacy of the work.

Then, again, as to loyalty, the still nobler counterpart of honour, that virtue in the name of which so many have silently sacrificed their dearest aspirations, no one can transcend its ordinary dictates who has not first fulfilled them. Without a right self-love there can be no true self-sacrifice, for it is to the higher and nobler

interests of self that we immolate the lower ones. Still less, without a sincere love of the Church, can we sacrifice her outer prestige to a higher cause, submitting her lesser and more temporal interests to those which are eternal. Truth and loyalty can never be outgrown, but they can be *transmuted*. The Church too must die to live, and must die continually to live continually. But only by those who die and live along with her can her sacrifice be brought to pass. The Catholic who dies to keep Her as she is, and he who dies to make Her something else, are both loyal, but the first with a military, the second with a spiritual loyalty. From the soldier we learn those virtues of patience, of disregard for personal comfort and private advantage, without which nothing great can be accomplished. But a soldier is blind while a prophet has sight above the average, hence the greater pain and difficulty of his task.

In the eyes of the State every attacking force is a hostile one ; but in the spiritual commonwealth this is not always the case. The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the Church is besieged, not only by those who would crush and destroy her, but also by those who covet her beauty and long to possess her, and

who, perhaps, in the designs of God, will eventually do so.

Our author describes his disillusionment when he realized his position as a tool in the hands of those who could use him for any purpose, however iniquitous: "Je me sentis tout à coup humilié de courir des chances de crime, et de me trouver à la main un sabre d'esclave au lieu d'une épée de chevalier" (p. 83). So, too, with the Christian knight who has entered into the larger and more remote issues of the cause he serves. What he would have regarded as lawful warfare in his earlier days, he would consider sheer murder in his later ones; he cannot curse what God has blessed. His duty is no longer blind but enlightened; his work is living and personal, and responsible; not prescribed in advance, but varying with every new circumstance that arises.

If reform be truly in the direction of progress, then it must be in the direction of an ever higher and more spiritual freedom, for the obligations of the law fall off in proportion as the individual enters into more intimate relations with the Church and those eternal realities which she represents. But, in so far as the reformer recognizes this truth, will he experience an ever

new demand on his energy and activity. He has no right to destroy old bounds in order to set up new ones; his task is to widen the city, and not to create a new one. Too many reformers have wished to preserve intact the seed they had come to cast into the earth, forgetting that, if it is to bring forth fruit, it must first perish. In this process of preservation they began to systematize, and then to love the system they had created better than the cause for which they had created it. Passing thus into a spirit of mere antagonism and opposition, they set up system against system, and the faith and loyalty, which had been transfigured but not extinguished in the former stage, are finally quenched in this latter one. Thus does a man find himself the enemy of his former leaders and companions. He must fight now, not for their greater good, but for the safety of himself and his personal followers. He has a rival system to protect and extend, a new-made Church to defend against the old one. The craving for something settled and certain has proved too strong, and he has built himself a boat in place of the ark in which he formerly dwelt. He wants to be folded, and he wants to fold in a pen with solid, visible palings, which shall justify his works and ways.

But the true reformer must be without hearth or home or city to dwell in—an exile, who belongs still to his own country, because he will never accept of another in its place.

If we look into the matter closely we shall see that this purely military type of obedience is closely connected with a theory as to external adhesion which is bound to be ultimately outgrown. Perhaps all the cruelties of the Middle Ages will not seem so barbarous, to our descendants of a few ages hence, as the idea that any Church should have tolerated within her fold members whose adherence was simply outward; of the body and not of the soul. The preposterous deception of the thing will shock future generations as it cannot shock the present one, because of the prejudice of custom. As men come to realize that faith implies an ever living activity of the entire soul, and that we are out of the Church every moment that we do not spiritually belong to her, so too will the conception of loyalty come to transcend that of mere military obedience and fellowship.

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We look then "to the mountains whence help shall come"; to those great ones whose feet are

most solidly established upon the earth, but whose heads reach highest into the heavens. The occasion demands more than the ordinary soldier can give, a more entire self-sacrifice, a more utter self-abandonment. There can be no rest on the word of command, with a blind indifference to its results. Our new soldier must go forward with his eyes open and his soul in his hands; confident, not because he cannot see the dangers that are in front of him, nor because he has no personal responsibility in regard to them, but because nothing that happens can signify provided he be true to the call within him. When such men arise we shall cease to expect from our enemies the salvation that should come from our friends. Why should the best results be the work of an enemy's hand? Why should we not have prophets who shall be true, not only at the beginning and in the middle, but even unto the end? Such men must be brave as soldiers are brave; loyal as soldiers are loyal; but their call is to a devotion more entire than that of mere military obedience. In addition to the soldier's knapsack they bear on their shoulders the heavy burthen of personal responsibility, for a light which their own eyes have seen, a call which their own ears

have heard. Their love for the Church is higher in proportion as it is more painful, for it is to justify them in urging her on to her own passion and death, a passion and death which they are to share along with her. Because *her* vital interests are *their* vital interests, because *her* suffering is *their* pain, they can stand by and see her agonize even unto death, but a death which is to result in victory. Like the disciples of their Master, so such men may say of the Church which He has left us, "Eamus et nos et moriamur cum ea." Let her die to live, and let us die along with her.

BLACK BUT COMELY

THE present Pontiff has taken it for his device to "restore all things in Christ," and a short time ago a little pamphlet[1] appeared in which were discussed the steps he had already taken towards the fulfilment of this noble ambition, and the steps he was yet likely to take. In this treatise was also mention made of many past efforts in the same direction of ecclesiastical reform ; efforts aimed for the most part at establishing things in such a manner as to be independent of personal virtue, uninfluenced by personal corruption. Each new reformer approaches the task with the idea that, if anything be amiss, it is because the ideal of legislation has not yet been attained, the ground has not been completely covered, every case has not been considered and provided for. Hence a continually extending web of laws to meet every emergency and counteract every evil instinct. But from all this arises a new and unforeseen difficulty, for,

[1] Piv X, I suoi atti ed i suoi intendimenti.

like mankind before the Deluge, the laws themselves increase and multiply to an unmanageable extent, until they come to need legislation on their own account, so that Pius X, our latest reformer, looks to their simplification and unification as another of his great life plans.

It is certainly not a cheerful history this, of the noble efforts of so many holy men, crowned with short success, followed by long failure. The writer of the pamphlet itself, having sufficiently indicated that the present Pope is by no means the first on the particular path of reform which he has chosen, surely justifies our presentiment that, if not the first, neither will he be the last; that his efforts, however earnest, may be doomed to meet with no more complete success than those of his predecessors.

Now although all will admit that, in purely civil matters, it is at least as difficult, possibly more so, to keep the political machinery clean, yet, when we come to deal with ecclesiastical abuses, there are complications in the way of reform which do not exist in that other province. We have, here, at once more surprise and scandal at the very necessity of reform, and less practical determination in carrying it out. We are dealing with material corruptions, akin to those which

infect any ordinary commonwealth, but we seem, nevertheless, to make some special distinction in our treatment thereof; to be checked by considerations of reverence and loyalty which do not impede our action in purely political matters.

The laws of the country are enforced by the brute strength of a country. Rulers and people are equal in their regard, and, in proportion as a government is enlightened and just and constitutional, the keeping of the laws is a matter exposed to public notice and observation. Open trial is the privilege of free citizens, and the safeguard of general law is the publicity with which it is exercised. We are not asked to blindly *trust* our king, nor our parliament, nor our judges, nor our officials; we are simply invited to see that they do their duty. In certain individual instances we may have confidence in the personal integrity of particular men and we choose them accordingly, but we do not base our security solely on this confidence. We are not surprised, in public matters, to find men more or less self-seeking and even unprincipled; the less so the better, and we should wish to reach as high a standard as we can; still we do not trust our country wholly to the chances of personal honesty, but rather to that system of public

control and supervision which is a guarantee as perfect as can be obtained.

When, however, we turn to spiritual government, we find ourselves confronted with a totally different estimate of the situation. The election to any particular office is not preceded by an examination but by a "Veni Creator"; the safeguards of integrity are of mingled spiritual and material elements, so that we are never quite sure whether we are to hope for the fulfilment of duty, on the part of our spiritual officials, from motives of conscience or from motives of necessity. A civil officer, who is detected in corrupt practices, reaps the penalty of his deeds; his punishment is the natural legal result of his delinquencies. In the case of an ecclesiastical offender the matter is less simple; there enters the prevailing consideration that his sin and his punishment, as likewise his reward, lie mainly in another and more spiritual sphere; that his sin is worse, but that his punishment, in this world, must be less.

Now an unfortunate result of this confusion of views and this mingling of two orders is that things are not managed according to the standard of the one or the other, and are not, consequently, managed at all. And, furthermore, it

results that, from a purely natural failing, there arises a supernatural scandal; we are not only pained by the misdoings of an ecclesiastic, as we should be pained by those of a civil magistrate, but we are shocked and surprised, as we should be, did we come on a choir of angels cheating each other at cards or quarrelling over a fortune.

Even in the civil order it is possible to fall into an analogous error; and this is what happens to those who expect a state, a country, or any corporation to be Christian in the same way in which an individual is Christian. This was the cherished ideal of Gladstone; an ideal in the pursuit of which he made some serious public mistakes. The ideal of a perfectly Christian State may, indeed, constitute an end towards which we should continually move, but it is at least open to question whether it is possible of attainment, so long as the human race remains subject to any material conditions at all. And it is somewhat significant that moral idealists, such as Tolstoi, who would ask of their country that she should act in the manner of an early Christian martyr, should also be of those who look to a voluntary extinction of the entire human race as the highest and ultimate goal of its efforts.

So that universal meekness would be the preparation for universal death, and corporate disinterestedness for corporate suicide. Tolstoi is probably logical, and his doctrine, with its corollary, should furnish matter for reflection when we are tempted to advocate perfect unselfishness on the part of an empire or state.

An individual may rightly lay down his life for his friend, and may even turn the other cheek to the enemy who smites him. But in this he is following the law of life and not of death, the law of the higher life, to which the lower must be subordinated. He is sacrificing that which is material and limited to that which is spiritual and universal; that which is lessened by the participation of others to that which is capable of endless distribution.

But when we turn to the dealings of one country with another we are confronted by a different and more primitive law. A State exists, in great part, just for the protection of those material rights which an individual may sometimes most nobly renounce. Many other advantages it possesses also, spiritual and intellectual advantages. But these result rather from the safeguarding of the first, while its primary end is the physical and material well-being of its

members. These things being secured, men are free to go on to the pursuit of higher ends, and in proportion as they advance in this pursuit, as spiritual objects become more to them and material objects less, so too will the State assume a less gross and material form. War is the natural and chronic condition of savage men, it is the exception amongst civilized countries. But, though the war of powder and steel may be rare, the war of commerce has taken its place, and, until mankind reach a still higher state of evolution, the struggle of self-interest will rather have changed its form than lessened its force. And should we ever reach our ideal of a perfectly unselfish State, the question offers itself—*Shall we then require a State at all?*

When we turn now to consider the same question in regard to the Church, whether we agree with Tolstoi or not, this much we must admit, that, in so far as the Church is a political and temporal State, she will inevitably share the characteristics of her civil counterpart. Hence she will be subject, in the first place, to the corruptions which spring from the necessary imperfection of the instruments she has to employ; and, in the second place, we shall find her hampered by the defects incidental to any

material corporation as such, a corporation being, as we have seen, doomed to the limitations of a certain form of self-love. Paradoxical as it may sound, the Church, regarded under this aspect—regarded, that is to say, as the visible external Church—cannot be wholly *Christian* any more than the State. She can endeavour to christianize herself more and more, which means, in ordinary parlance, to become ever more unselfish and disinterested, but perfect disinterestedness is not consistent with any kind of material life at all. Could the visible Church attain such an unselfish condition, then the same question would arise in her regard as in that of the civil State: Would there be any further reason for her to exist at all? One last act of heroism would remain, that of laying down the life which was only to last by virtue of its own inherent imperfection. The visible Church on earth would have done her work, would have shaped her members in accordance with their spiritual destiny; to go on living would be to mar the work she had performed.

That day, we know full well, cannot come so long as this world continues. We have no belief in anarchism, even in its more spiritual form; we need a State with its laws, we need a

visible Church with its discipline, and, in spite of all their incidental vices, we shall need them to the end of our material existence, which is beset by the same vices. But let us be as courageous in acknowledging the inevitable imperfection of such a system as we are determined in maintaining its necessity. If the State is not dishonoured by those who deal ruthlessly with its material corruptions, then neither is the Church dishonoured by similar treatment.

Here some will exclaim that it is exactly what holy, reforming pontiffs wish to do ; that again and again they have set themselves to heal the sores of that body which was committed to their care. But here we come to the very heart of the question, and touch the point with which this paper would deal. Our spiritual superiors acknowledge, indeed, that the Church is both human and divine, that she has a body as well as a soul, and that this body is subject to many kinds of disease. But even as, speaking in the name of the Church, they acknowledge her secondary and material existence, they also cry out in her name, "Touch me not! for I am the Bride of Christ."

We see human errors and would correct them in a human way, the only way that could be

really effectual. But, as we raise our hands to do so, we are called on to refrain in the name of that spiritual dignity which the Church can never lose. Our rulers are human, and have behaved as "human, too human"; but when we would adopt the natural remedies, and preserve our own rights and liberty, we are bid remember that, though human, they represent that which is divine; that, in consequence, every measure of reformation must spring from their own initiative, and must never be imposed from without. Even a Czar, with his ministers, may be rightly opposed by a Duma; but pope and bishops may never be limited, in the exercise of their authority, by the opposition of the faithful; their checks must be self-imposed, their chastisements self-inflicted. Our rulers will admit, indeed, that the work of purification has sometimes been carried out by means of persecution; but this is simply explained as Providence turning deeds of wickedness into good results. The notion of a necessary reform being carried out by means of *legitimate* resistance to an *illegitimate* exercise of authority, is not admitted or suggested. Even though spiritual rulers be in the wrong, those who resist them are still more in the wrong; in raising their

hands against that which is human they insult that which is divine.

Thus we see that, although the defects incidental to an institution of mingled temporal and spiritual elements are acknowledged in the abstract, the full consequences of the truth are evaded in the concrete. Our rulers and teachers recognize their own faults and weaknesses, but claim immunity from the ordinary checks and safeguards. They warn the little ones that they must expect sometimes to behold evil in high places, but they impress upon them, in the same breath, the reverence they ever owe to the Bride of Christ, who is always beautiful, though sometimes black. So that the distinction which is ever being made between the eternal and the temporal, the divine and the human elements of the Church, is never really admitted in its consequences, never practically applied.

From all this arises another and more pernicious evil than Erastianism, for worse than the tyranny of the body of the State over the body of the Church (which tyranny, under the name of persecution, has not always been unfruitful of good) is the tyranny of her own body over her own soul. The spiritual Church cannot be really contaminated by the vices of her external

action ; but then neither can she wholly furnish the check and the remedy for those vices. To ask that they shall be treated with more gentleness for the sake of the reverence we owe to the "Bride of Christ" is, indeed, to humble the "Bride of Christ" far more deeply than her enemies can ever do, for it is to make her, in a sense, responsible for the faults of her human administration.

The spiritual Church has begun a life on earth which is to be completed and glorified in Heaven. She is eternal because her end is eternal, her means eternal, and the destinies to which she ministers eternal. The visible, material Church, with her government, her ministers, her discipline, her machinery, has, on the contrary, no claim to eternity ; she must humbly acknowledge her more earthly character and destiny ; she must accept the checks which are imposed on every human and imperfect mechanism ; she must not lay hold of the shield of spiritual dignity when she is found spotted with material corruptions.

We owe obedience to both visible and invisible Church, but the obedience in either case is of a different order. Our obedience to the visible Church must be more defined and positive

—less pervasive and supreme than that which we owe to the invisible Church. In so far as we obey the spiritual Church we obey that which is best in ourselves ; she represents to us that higher law which is in our own soul as in the souls of all who belong to her ; we can never be subservient in our obedience, because we are makers as well as doers of the law, but neither can there be any limit or qualification of our obedience, for the very same reason. But that absolutism, which need not even be guarded against in spiritual matters, because it is intrinsically impossible for it to infect them, is one of the perversions incidental to any kind of external government. In the spiritual Church the principle of self and the principle of otherness meet and mingle ; in the visible Church these two principles are firmly distinct. The spiritual Church can do no wrong ; her rights over us are simply co-extensive with the rights of our conscience and with our own actual participation in her life and being. The visible Church represents for us the principle of external authority, an authority at once more emphatic and more limited. In her action in our regard it is possible that a certain conflict of interests should arise, such as is not possible in the wholly

spiritual domain, where rulers and ruled are not really distinct.

We may hope to find the evils of tyranny and self-love less marked in the Church than in the civil State, but even in this modest hope we shall often be disappointed. And when such evils manifest themselves it is futile to seek the remedy simply by an appeal to the spirit ; the flesh must needs be corrected in a ruder manner. Giving a false honour to the human Church we lower and lessen the Divine ; we expect of this latter that she will control faults of which she herself is incapable, and for which she is not responsible, and we thus withdraw those faults from the only effectual correction—the correction, that is to say, of healthy criticism and legitimate resistance.

Trusting, then, in the essential purity and sanctity of the Invisible Church, which is the Church in the fullest and truest sense of the word, we can face without scandal, resist without disloyalty, the faults incidental to her external administration. It is as impossible to determine beforehand the lawful occasions of resistance as it is to foretell the abuses of authority from which those occasions will arise. Nor is it possible to lay down the safeguards, to say exactly

how far such resistance may go and no further. As there are abuses in the exercise of authority, so have there been, and will there ever be, abuses in the methods of resistance. But there will be more hope of a just and temperate resistance in so far as such resistance is not simply the work of passion, is not carried out half-heartedly like a semi-evil action, but is undertaken in the interests of conscience, and by those who love, not by those who hate the Church. And the best of all safeguards against excessive and illegitimate resistance to authority will be in the fact that such resistance carries with it its own penalty of pain and sorrow. For the rest it can only be said that, as some kind of authority is essential in every sort of general and common life, so the rights of that same authority extend just so far as that life extends and no farther. Once we feel that this authority is stretching into another department, not its own, the rights of resistance begin ; but such resistance can never be justified by merely selfish, personal motives of convenience and inconvenience.

And lastly, although a soul without a body cannot live and work upon the earth, nevertheless, in proportion to the vigour of the soul

should the body become slighter and more manageable. Like her immortal and mortal children, the Church too is both immortal and mortal, and should ever advance nearer and nearer to her own corporal extinction. The resurrection of the body can only follow on the death of the body, and the last supreme death must be preceded by many others.

Hence the Church may deliver up her body in all confidence to stripes and chastisement, for by its progressive purification shall her spirit become ever brighter and stronger till the moment of dissolution and freedom arrive.

THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDECH[1]

IT would be an interesting study to discover how far a higher or lower conception of the Priesthood accompanies a higher or lower state of religious fervour. In proportion, that is to say, to the religious earnestness of the people does the priest become more to them or less? Does their own intensity make them independent of sacerdotal guidance and support? or does their very interest in religion cause them to turn the more earnestly to their professed guides and teachers?

And again, as to the future, is the ideal for which we strive one according to which, religion becoming more spiritualized, men will go straight to God without any human help whatsoever? or is the Priesthood to preserve its dignity and importance, while becoming proportionately more spiritual in its characteristics? Is it to be reformed or to be eliminated? Is every man to

[1] A great part of this essay appeared originally in the *Monthly Register* of October, 1902.

become more and more the priest of his own soul? or will the priest become more indispensable just in proportion as that spiritual world, whose interests he should represent, whose treasures he should administer, becomes a more engrossing occupation of all mankind?

In answering a question like this we must not be satisfied with the opinion of a few strong and independent minds; the sounder philosophy will take into consideration, not only the expressed views, but even the instincts, of the weak and uneducated. Now there is undoubtedly, in the mass of the laity, a strong, instinctive longing for a priesthood. This is not peculiar to the ignorant alone, but is almost general in religious-minded people, possessed of the ordinary requirements, and not furnished with any special philosophy to the contrary. To tell such that every soul is sufficient to itself, and that the highest state is one in which no intermediary is suffered between the soul and God, would rather depress than flatter them. To them it appears that the priest makes God more near and visible and definite; he gives them a sense of providence and protection which they could not find in solitary religion. Nor is it only as a necessary element of the Church that

the priesthood is sacred to them. Apart from his character as representative of spiritual authority, as administrator of doctrine and sacramental grace, the priest is also the friend and guide who leads the soul on her way to God. He is regarded as a kind of impersonal being, who belongs not to himself, but to the body of the faithful and to each soul in particular. It is notable that such a man as Father Isaac Hecker, a mystic from the first, and one who was to be so known an advocate of the freedom of the individual soul, of its ability to get direct light and guidance from the eternal source of both, was yet greatly drawn to the Catholic Church precisely by the provision she makes for spiritual direction at the hands of her priesthood.

"Without father, without mother, without descent"; "appointed of God"; "king of justice, king of peace"; "a source of eternal salvation"; these are words, indeed, in which are described one higher than any earthly priest. Yet, as sketching out for us the fulness and perfection of the eternal priesthood, do they not also indicate that which is spiritually most essential to every type? The priest is the link between God and man, between the Church and the individual soul; he is appointed of God, in

whatever way that may be, which means that he comes to us with a message from the spiritual world, of which message he is the bearer and not the maker ; he is without parentage and descent, because he should live not for his own ends, but for those of One greater than himself.

Now out of these words may be drawn a true and spiritual conception of the priesthood, but also a very much lower one. Materially interpreted, they might justify the most pagan reverence for the priest, as for a being of awful and supernatural powers. And there is a servile veneration, in some members of the highest religions, which is but a refined counterpart of this superstitious deference. The priest is, in such cases, almost a divinity instead of a divine messenger ; he does not rouse the activity of the soul, but becomes an excuse for her inertia ; he is impersonal in his renunciation of his own rights, but most personal in his absorption of those of others. Where such a conception of the sacerdotal office prevails, we shall find arrogance in the priest, servility in the people, which latter easily passes into distrust and hatred ; the priest is disliked in proportion as he is indispensable ; in proportion as he is to

the faithful a perpetual reminder of their own helplessness.

It is just such a material conception of the priesthood which begins in clericalism and too often ends in anti-clericalism. Men whose religion is selfish and superstitious will use the priest for the sake of their own future welfare, but will distrust him even while they use him, just as all ignorant people are apt to distrust the expert on whom they are dependent, because they cannot distinguish the rightful limits of his authority. Let such as these once lose faith in the religion, which they have followed for purely selfish motives, and their reaction against the authority of the priesthood will be as violent as their previous docility was exaggerated.

Some, indeed, who are not intellectually more enlightened, but who are far more spiritual-minded and disinterested in their religion, will have the false confidence without the accompanying suspicion. They will regard it as a duty to commit themselves without reserve to the guidance of their priests. Because, to them, the affairs of the soul are paramount, therefore the authority of the priest, who stands for those affairs, must be equally paramount. Their misconception is grounded on a more generous

faith, and leads to a more spiritual result; yet it too is tinctured with that same clericalism which, if not in themselves then in others, will some day beget its own opposite.

The extreme right and the extreme left do, in fact, in this as in many other things, make the same demands, and the opposition is not in their respective ideals, but in the views which each side takes as to the actual fulfilment of those ideals. The anti-clerical, who points the finger of scorn at every case in which there is the least deviation from the highest standard of priestly perfection, does, in fact, demand that the clergy shall be not only charitable, devoted, self-sacrificing, but likewise cultured, scientific, and enlightened —an intellectual as well as a spiritual credit to their Church. If the priest fall short of this standard, no judgment can be too severe for his delinquencies, and the institution itself is condemned along with its representative.

On the extreme right we find more or less the same list of requirements, but an almost utter lack of discernment in the matter of their fulfilment. The ordinary pious layman is inclined to take for granted that his priests are equal to every emergency of modern thought, and as he is often himself but little interested in that same

modern thought, he remains wrapped in his illusions until the hour of death. If the modern world declare that his priests are wrong, so much the worse for the modern world ; and if occasionally the fact is so obvious that he is forced to admit it, he will acknowledge, indeed, that some individual priests are unequal to their task, but will not modify his view of the priesthood as a whole.

In the Roman Catholic body of this country it happened, somewhat curiously, that this spirit of sacerdotalism was greatly reinforced by the movement of conversions to Catholicism, which developed a more strongly clerical tendency than was to be found in the old English Catholics. This was due in part to the Romanizing tendencies of many converts—a reaction against their previous opinions ; it was also perhaps owing to a more keen and awakened spiritual existence, resulting in a greater need of direction and guidance, which the priesthood was naturally expected to supply. But the exaggerations of this tendency were bound to give rise to difficulties, and it is perhaps one of the points on which we have most to regret the weakening of the old Catholic influence in our country. Our Catholic forefathers were not very intellectual in their

religious views, but they were extremely independent of external support, both in faith and practice. We hear nowadays of souls that are unhinged by some clerical scandal, or even some clerical exhibition of ignorance. To the old English Catholic this difficulty would not have occurred. He was not much given to seeking advice and example, and to him the Englishman's soul was his castle, not to be entered or meddled with by priest or layman. He had a deep reverence for the priest as administrator of the sacraments, but did not habitually look to him for intellectual light and guidance, nor even, to any great extent, for spiritual direction. He was not dismayed nor distressed by a priest making some egregious blunder, because he did not regard him as more infallible than his neighbours. Within a certain province he paid him the sincerest respect, but that province was very strictly circumscribed and limited.

Now in some ways this view was not a very spiritual one. It was a result of repression and stagnation, and represented a much too departmental view of religion. Catholics had been reduced, by a long necessity for concealment, to keeping their religion strictly apart

from the other interests of life, their priests were hidden away as carefully as their chapels and emblems of worship ; and it was partly a result of this conduct that their clergy came to be regarded as officials rigidly confined to a certain class of duties. Nothing could be more thoroughly unlike a typical old English Catholic household than the picture, for example, drawn by Mrs. Humphry Ward in *Helbeck of Bannisdale*. It was in the unpervasiveness of his religious practices that we find the distinctive note of the old English Catholic, and the Cisalpine Club was but an extreme presentment of a fairly universal temper of mind. His neglect of spiritual direction, his confinement of the priest to strictly official duties sprang, in the old Catholic, from narrowness as well as strength, and he was bound to give his priest a wider sphere so soon as his own religious requirements grew more pervasive and less defined.

This was what happened when, with an influx of fresh blood due to the rising tide of conversions, came a new zest in things spiritual. As the practices and ceremonies of religion crept forth into open day, so too the clergy found themselves in a more influential position.

From being regarded simply as administrators of the sacraments, they found themselves looked to for guidance in countless other matters ; and now there was a tendency to ask of them too much as before there had been demanded of them too little. Because the priest stood for religion, it was assumed that he must have special light on every question into which religion entered ; it was to him the laity should turn for the solution of all such difficulties, and his light was supposed to be as unfailing as his authority was undeniable.

Now it is obvious that in certain matters this expectation is a reasonable one. The priest is the mouthpiece of the Church, imparting instruction, communicating sacramental grace, and for all this he needs a special theological training, which is not required by the mass of the laity. But it is quite another matter to infer that he is therefore to be always in the van of religious science and progress, and to be a master of apologetic as well as a teacher of the accepted theology. We may certainly expect that, in a class strictly devoted to the interests of religion, there will always be many to whom it is a chief object of intellectual as well as practical occupation ; but even when such is the case it confers

on the priest no consequent right of pre-eminence.

Here it will be objected that, in any Church which admits the practice of confession, it is impossible for the priest rightly to fulfil his duty if he be not educated and enlightened, in touch with modern thought, and capable of directing modern minds. And this is true; but we can admit it without consequently granting to the clergy any actual leadership in these matters. It is clear that a more educated priesthood is needed to deal with men of thought and culture than with the humbler classes of the community, and that every soul turns instinctively for guidance to those who are like-minded and sympathetic. But the point under discussion is not whether priests are to be educated and enlightened, but whether they are to possess a mind-supremacy in Christian apologetics and religious philosophy. Are they to guard the faithful in virtue of their superior knowledge and capacity as well as in virtue of their unique spiritual position? It is here we would maintain, in opposition to the faith of clericals and the criticism of anti-clericals, that, supposing always our priests to possess the official knowledge requisite to their official position, their

honour and their usefulness rest on grounds more solid than their superior theological learning or capacity.

Against all this it will be urged that we are at present confronted with the unpleasant fact that our clergy are too often unfit to cope with the rising tide of human thought, and that the faithful can find no guidance in the difficulties that beset them. It is to the priest they have a right to turn, and how can the priest help them unless he be a master in the field of science also? Some will even ascribe to him direct supernatural faculties, rather than leave his power and influence in such matters uncertain.

To this we would reply that a priest must certainly be educated according to the age in which he lives, but that his influence is, nevertheless, intended to be chiefly spiritual and not intellectual. If he be intellectually a fossil of the past, he can obviously not even understand a good deal of what his people are discussing; but, even if he be fairly in touch with the age, it may still happen that he finds himself quite inferior in mental endowments to those that seek his spiritual help. We know too well that the priest is himself as much exposed to the trials of faith as any one of his flock. How then can

he be expected to have an answer ready to all the difficulties, which press upon himself as well as upon his penitent?

It is clear then that his strength is to come from some other source than his learning and education, that his breadth and tolerance must have another and deeper basis than his technical knowledge, and that it is only the more ignorant classes of the community that can continue to look to their priests for the final solution of an intellectual difficulty, even should that difficulty appear subversive of the very foundations of religion. There was a time when the clergy were almost sole possessors of learning, both secular and religious; but that time has gone by, and it is, in the etymological sense of the word, a superstition that makes us still cherish our old expectations.

To turn then once more to the question at the beginning of this article, we would say that, so long as any visible Church exists, a visible priesthood is equally necessary, and that the process of religious evolution on this point must be in the working out of a higher ideal and not in the elimination of a necessary element.

Furthermore, the notion of the Church and the notion of the priesthood will follow a

kindred line of development, both becoming proportionally spiritualized. The crowd need the Church and need the priest in a different way from that in which the saint and the mystic need them. The former take their spiritual goods as it were from outside. The Church is not so much their means as their end; they can hardly conceive of a religion without a visible Church, and God dwells within Her as His Presence dwelt in the Ark. To them the priest is like the lawyer, only in spiritual instead of temporal matters. He lays down and interprets for them the laws of the Church and manages the private concerns of each soul according to the legislation adopted for all.

But the mystic—and under this name we would comprise all the spiritual-minded—is always half in the Church and half out of it, if we speak of the Church which we can see and define, and not of the Church in that deepest spiritual sense which evades understanding and description. In so far as the mystic *wholly* belongs to any Church at all, it can only be to a church which is of eternity and not of time; any earthly vessel, however holy and needful, must ever be to him a means and not an end. As his soul grows more dependent on God it

grows less dependent on any intermediary. And this is not the history of souls in one communion more than another, but in every communion. And yet, as God is not wholly immanent, but likewise transcendent, so will the most mystical soul need ever some representative of the principle of otherness. Of this the Church will be to him a symbol in her visible form, a more than symbol in her spiritual reality.

Thus, too, with the office of the priesthood in his regard. Just because of his nearness to God he may mistake himself for God if, in this life of shade and twilight, he does not turn resolutely to some outer representative of that which is greater than himself. He too will need the priest in his own way, not only as medium between himself and the Church, but even as medium between himself and God; though here ever less and less, and differently from the man of predominantly external religion.

To the priest, too, there will be a difference in his duty according as he deals with one class or the other; according as he is purely official and an intermediary between the individual and the visible Church, or only partly official, and a medium between the individual and God. It is in this latter department that conflict may arise

between his duty as a mere officer of the Church and his duty as a messenger of God ; and it is in this latter function that he may likewise be supplanted by the wholly unofficial messenger, who is a priest in the spiritual but not in the theological sense. So that even his most spiritual powers will ever have a certain connexion with his office, but a connexion which is more subtle and less definite just in proportion to their spirituality.

There is a body of the priesthood which corresponds with and belongs wholly to the body of the Church ; there is a soul of the priesthood which corresponds with and belongs to the soul of the Church. It is through his office that the priest receives likewise a special adaptation to these more spiritual duties ; but just in proportion as they are higher and holier than the others, so is he, in his official capacity, less essential to their fulfilment. The spiritual priesthood will often accompany its official counterpart ; but as grace may be bestowed independently of the sacraments, so may the spiritual power of the priesthood exist in those who do not bear its official mark.

And as these members of the spiritual priesthood are recipients of an order which God alone

confers, so does every priest, in so far as he enters on these higher functions, receive his mandate from God, and not from his earthly superiors. He has a mission apart from and above his official duties, and it cannot be regulated by the same laws. By what laws it is to be governed, how far conflict is to be avoided, how far spiritual force is to be at least tempered to external law and necessity, these are questions which admit of no general answer. The priest, even in his most spiritual capacity, can never wholly repudiate those claims which arise from his official position. Perhaps the only answer that can be given is that he must put his spiritual duties first up to the point at which disregard for external law would react unfavourably on spiritual life; he must act for the eternal and not the temporal Church until those elements of the latter which are essential to the welfare of the former are imperilled. But here again, who shall find precedent for that which transcends all precedent? and who shall find the way to avoid passing scandal at the actions of those who must work for eternity and not time? In every life there is a part which evades given law and immediate judgment.

But if these two sides of his vocation may

sometimes come into conflict, they are, nevertheless, inextricably interwoven, and qualify, each of them, the entire product. A priest cannot be wholly official, nor wholly spiritual; he is, or ought to be, both—each in virtue of the other. Taking him thus in his completeness, it is possible to avoid the errors of clericalism and anti-clericalism, for it is just by rendering the very highest glory to the priesthood that we escape all danger of treating it with idolatry and subservience. In its very vastness and responsibility will be its check and corrective, and we shall limit the official element more strictly in proportion as we realize that it is intended to minister to greater and more spiritual ends.

Let us cease then to ask of our priest that he be a walking encyclopædia of answers to religious difficulties, or even an assured model of virtuous conduct. He may not always possess the best or the final answer to a theological difficulty, but he may have a special power of helping us to answer them ourselves by his continued insistence on the rights of the eternal as contrasted with the temporal, of the spiritual as contrasted with the material, of the whole as contrasted with the part, of Christ as contrasted

with the world. What may be the final outcome of many discussions, his flock knows not and he himself may not know. But what both do know is that he holds his office as the representative of the higher and the holier cause, that he has been prepared during long years in order that he may be better fitted to help in the shaping of passing events to eternal ends, and that he has studied the needs, the miseries, the vices of the human soul in order that he may better guide it to its everlasting destiny. He need not much dread his own incidental ignorance if he be conscious of zeal and earnestness; and souls will trust him, not in proportion to his knowledge, but in proportion to his unswerving devotion to the cause of God and the Church. The completer his intellectual equipment the better for his office and his cause, and an extreme destitution in this respect might simply unfit him for his duties. But the essential, indispensable quality of the priest is that he be *priestly*, i.e. the representative of the unfailing cause of God in a failing world.

And as intellectual enlightenment is not that which is chiefly demanded of him, so neither is it goodness, in the ordinary sense, for which we look. A bad man cannot be a good priest, but

a man with many faults and weaknesses may be a better priest than another who stands higher in the scale of moral perfection. His faults and weaknesses and perplexities will not impede him in his task unless they make him falter as to the goodness of his cause. Like the soldier and the statesman he has wedded himself to this cause, for better or for worse—he need not blind himself to the many defects which will often obscure the worthiness of his object, but he must be loyal to it in fair weather and in foul. He cannot answer all difficulties, but he can, if convinced himself, help to convince others that the faith, so often overcast and clouded, is worth fighting for and preserving through all storms and bewilderment. He is, in fact, a representative of eternity, of eternal justice and eternal love ; and though, in some sense, every man or woman may be a priest, yet to him it is the one calling of life. His outer occupations are ministerial to this main one, he is set apart and consecrated to the cause, his spiritual action is strengthened by his official and sacramental powers. His action and his influence will ever be rather in proportion to his devotion and loyalty and disinterestedness than to his intellectual or moral endowments.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EXPERT AUTHORITY

WE were once much impressed, though not in the way intended, by the tale of a conversion which a preacher narrated in the course of his sermon. He said that he had once questioned a gentleman on the motives which had led him to enter the Catholic Church, and this was the answer he received :—

"I did so on the principles which guide all the rest of my conduct. When my body requires attention I summon a doctor, and submit myself to his direction in all that regards my health. When I want my property looked after I call for my lawyer and abandon all such matters to him. When I found that my soul also required attention, what better could I do than follow the same course of action, and entrust my spiritual interests to those possessed of the necessary qualifications for their care and management? Therefore I sought out and entered an Infallible Church, and can now be as much at rest in the

affairs of my salvation as I am in all temporal matters."

It is obvious that the argument, as thus presented, lacks any true basis, since it leaves the question unanswered as to how our convert convinced himself that the Catholic Church possessed that expert knowledge and authority in spiritual affairs which his doctor and lawyer possessed in other matters. But this is not the point with which we want to deal. Doubtless the hero of the story did obtain sufficient proof on this point to convince him, and we cannot suppose that the preacher failed to imply this in his narrative. But the real interest of the tale centres in the theory of direction which is therein exemplified, a theory which our convert, not by any means a rare specimen, applied equally to his material and spiritual interests.

The question, indeed, as to the use and value of direction, and its relations to personal liberty, is not confined to religious matters only. In all walks of life we find the same general class distinction of "directors" and "directed," or expert and layman, the "directors" being those endowed with a certain expert knowledge, the "directed" those who, without attempting to attain this same knowledge, to probe it, to prove it, or to justify

it, accept the fact of its existence as sufficiently certified by general consent, and regulate their conduct in the various departments of life, each one according to the dictates of the expert he has chosen as his guide.

So far from there being in these days, called days of liberty, any tendency to assert the rights of individual judgment and initiative as against submission to this expert authority, there was never perhaps a time in the world's history when the expert held more varied and emphatic sway. And this is most reasonably accounted for by the advance of knowledge and the multiplication of sciences. The mass of firmly acquired information becomes daily more and more impossible of assimilation by the single individual, and a certain division of labour becomes as essential in the management of each one's life as it is in the working of a huge manufactory. Any kind of scientific knowledge, which has reached some degree of general certainty, becomes a fact for all humanity, just as a newly discovered island becomes a fact in the knowledge of the whole world. But since we cannot personally master the knowledge of all such facts—which knowledge, however, is necessary to some extent for each individual, once it has become the property of

the society in which he lives—we are bound to submit to the guidance of experts in those matters wherein we ourselves have no experience, and to deem ourselves above "direction" in such things would be to deem ourselves above all wisdom and knowledge but our own.

The recognition of this truth has, on many minds, the practical effect which it had on our convert; they parcel out their lives just as they might parcel out an estate, into so many different departments, over each one of which some expert holds immediate sway. In the example we have adduced, the exaggeration of the principle of expert authority is immediately evident. But it would perhaps be easier to explain exactly wherein the fallacy consists if we were to recognize that it appears also in other departments of life, although in religion it is liable to become particularly contradictory and misleading, as we shall see later on. What we should therefore ask ourselves is whether absolute and unlimited departmental obedience in any line of life is compatible with that personal responsibility which no one must abdicate.

It is quite true that we have no right to overrule our doctor's prescriptions in the matter of drugs, our lawyer's advice as to the technical

form of deeds and wills; but neither can we say, on the other hand, that any expert has supreme rights, even in his own province. For the whole of our life enters, in some manner, into each smallest part of it; it is not a divisible entity, but brings its varied, far-reaching, eternal interests into the least question on which it touches. Hence there is not only a tendency in each department of life to overlap the others, but there is likewise the dominant interest of the whole life, to which all these special departments are by right subjected. As private individuals we have no right to interfere with expert questions, but we can and must deal with their bearing on the whole. Our obedience in each department of life will be qualified by our estimate of its relation to the rest; the health of our body, the management of our fortune, and all other defined interests will become both less important and more important as we recognize, first that they are but a part of a greater whole, next that they cannot be a part without also involving in some manner all the rest.

Furthermore, those we have called "directors" in each department will be distinguishable in dignity and authority accordingly as they apprehend or ignore this truth. The mere depart-

mental expert will be to the leaders in the same science, who join a knowledge of the part with a philosophy of the whole, as the mason is to the builder, as the builder is to the architect. We all instinctively feel the difference between the doctor who treats us as if we *were* bodies and the doctor who treats us as if we *had* bodies; the same difference runs, in a greater or less degree, through all trades and professions. Each of them, exercised by those who are without appreciation of the rest, tends at once to exclude the others and to absorb them; to exclude them from its sympathy and interest, to absorb them into its service and drudgery. For we must all have some kind of philosophy of the whole, and if we confine our thoughts and interests to a single department in life, then that department will become for us the whole; our negation of the greater is converted into an assertion of the lesser.

The director who takes the nobler and more enlightened view of his profession and department, who both limits it and enlarges it, by a recognition of its relation to all other parts and to the whole, will exercise a continual detachment in the performance of his duties. For we must remember that it is not by force of mere tyranny

that the doctor induces us to put bodily health and the prolongation of life above every other consideration. We, the directed, are only too ready to submit to his dictates in the matter. The interest of the moment so blocks the horizon that it appears to be the one and only interest for all times ; and director and directed are carried along on the same current. But the best, the wisest, and the most unselfish director will control his own tendency to exaggeration in the department which he represents, and will also check the disposition of his client to a disproportionate esteem for one particular interest.

Physicians like the late Sir Andrew Clark are examples of this temper of mind. As to his greater or lesser professional merits opinions may vary ; as to his mental attitude on this question all would agree. To him bodily health was an important factor in the whole of life, but it was not itself the whole of life. With such men we need not to put forth those combative instincts of self-preservation, which must and ought to assert themselves whenever we feel that a part of our interests is being tended to the detriment of the whole.

But, when we return to our first instance, to the convert who committed each department of

his life to the care of the best acknowledged experts, it may be urged, first, that by this very method of procedure he provided against an overlapping of interests, since the director of each domain would take care to protect it from all intruding forces; secondly, that religion, at least, is in a different position in this respect, since it rightly claims a paramount position over all other interests—"What will it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of his own soul?"

As regards the first of these objections, I would adhere to the thesis already set forth, and maintain that the interests of the whole are too subtle and pervasive to be comprehended and covered by even the most accurate departmental division; in each separate class they must be represented, and ignored in none.

But the question as to the paramount and overruling interests of religion opens out another problem, and not a few will think that, here at last, and by no means to their regret, they have found a land in which their soul "may sleep and take its rest," abandoning all cares to its appointed guides. Like the children of a large and flourishing family they are anxious about nothing, but live in quiet expectation of the

daily bread which never fails to appear. And as to that detachment and self-restraint on the part of the governing and directing powers of which we have lately spoken, it will seem to them that, in matters of religion, such an idea is completely out of place. Our spiritual superiors, they will say, are responsible for us in the one all-important interest of life, and can hardly become excessive in their demands unless they so utterly abandon their own province as to lose all appearance of right. They do not repudiate the theory of our convert as to a departmental obedience in religious matters, but they likewise, with him, regard this department as possessing such a supremacy that it will rightly overlap and dominate all the rest.

But is there not a fallacy in the very essence of such a theory? If religion be a departmental interest of life, how can it also be one that is paramount? and if it be paramount, how can it be departmental? If it is all-in-all, it cannot be a part; if it is a part, it cannot be all-in-all. Religion does, in fact, forfeit all claim to a definite, exclusive realm of interest and authority in so far as it claims to be a dominant factor in a man's life. A departmental obedience in matters of religion can only be conceded to

religion in its external and technical sense ; to religion as represented by certain fixed and very limited duties ; to religion which demands the sanctification of one day in seven. But religion as paramount, as all-pervasive, as representing the eternal in all that is transitory, the spiritual in all that is earthly, cannot be enforced by the same mode of authority, nor fulfilled by the same kind of obedience. If philosophy be the "handmaid of theology," then theology must be taken in a more than scientific sense ; and if religion claim to be the supreme rule of our conduct, then religion loses all claim to a province of her own, and becomes only the ultimate and eternal element of all other departments of life and all other interests. She becomes both more and less ; she is the salt of all the earth, but has no land of her own. Thus we see that, when our spiritual superiors make definite claims on our intellectual or moral or civil obedience, they are speaking in the name of theology as defined and limited science, or of religion as a restricted department of life and conduct ; not of theology as the mistress of philosophy and all other knowledge, or of religion as the supreme element of all life and action. They are speaking in virtue of their departmental authority,

and are to be obeyed within the limits of that department. Their department is a very sacred one, their office as rulers therein is very holy and very honourable, the obedience we owe them is essential to the well-being of ourselves and others, but the rights and duties, being departmental, are also limited, and must not transgress their established bounds. Directly our religious rulers make an unlimited claim they are passing from the restricted to the universal sense of religion, and are appealing to the tribunal that is within each soul, and not to the external authority of pope or bishop. Even according to this higher religion we are not solitary units, supreme and independent; we still need a Church, a spiritual community, and owe deference to that authority which has been to us the chief source of light and grace; but we have also inner lights and an inner philosophy; there is an inevitable, though often unconscious, adjustment of all things within our own soul, and this adjustment no one can make but ourselves. It is, after all, but another aspect, a further development of that supremacy of conscience, to which every external spiritual authority issues at last its appeal and not its *commands*.

If this distinction be not, at least implicitly, made, those to whom religion is not a mere accessory, but a predominant interest, are bound, sooner or later, to meet with intellectual and moral trouble. Even to our convert there may have come the time when he could not simply abandon each department of his life to the various directors thereof, but was embarrassed by the conflicting interests of one or several. No dependence on authority will exempt men from the necessity of some personal and inner synthesis of the various interests of life; such a synthesis may be habitually unconscious, but it will become conscious directly it is affected by any hostile interference. If we have confounded religion, in its definite and limited sense, with religion as paramount and universal, we are bound to suffer a few severe shocks whenever there is any rivalry between secular and ecclesiastical interests. We have to guard ourselves against excessive zeal on the part of our spiritual superiors, acting in behalf of their own province, just as we have to guard ourselves against the otherwise absorbing claims of the physician, who looks only to the welfare of our body, or the lawyer who considers only the good of our estate.

Religious government, regarded in its departmental aspect, is not to be entirely confounded with officialism ; official rulers may sometimes speak in the name of religion in its universal sense. But the nature of their demands, and the response to those same demands, should vary according to the cause which they represent. If they speak in the name of the visible Church, and of the definite duties we owe Her, their commands may be positive, but they must also be restricted, and, if they go beyond the rightful limits, must be treated like the exorbitant demands of any other specialist. We may not ourselves be the only or the best judges as to the rightfulness of the command in what personally regards us ; but the matter is, in itself, one which is justly liable to some kind of criticism. Provided, on the other hand, the order of our superiors does not transcend their own province, they are entitled to absolute obedience in what they ask. Thus their rights are positive in proportion to their limitation.

If, on the other hand, they speak in the name of religion in its transcendent and universal sense, as they may sometimes do since, even in spiritual matters, we are strictly social beings, then their commands, though far more solemn,

are by no means so positive, nor can they be fulfilled in the same literal manner. Religion, taken in this its truest and fullest sense, is not a science like other sciences, nor are its teachers experts like other experts. When the Church, as represented by our ecclesiastical rulers, or even our spiritual brethren, speaks with authority in these supreme matters, it is not with the authority of science or civil law, which must produce their facts and proofs before they claim our assent. The facts to which the Church then appeals are never so plain and tangible that they cannot be denied; her proofs are never so logically irresistible that they cannot be controverted. But, if weaker than science in this respect, she is stronger in another, for the facts to which she appeals are within our own heart as well as hers; her proofs derive their cogency from the reasonings of our own conscience, and are confirmed by the spiritual needs of which we are conscious. She appeals from the revelation without, which is clearer and more consistent, to the revelation within, which is dimmer indeed and more fitful, but also more intimate and imperative. Her teachers teach us, not as the expert teaches the ignorant, nor as he who knows teaches him who does not know, but rather as

making each one aware of the light which is already within him, anointing his spiritual sight with that sacramental grace which is the inheritance of each one only in so far as he is in communion with others and with the whole.

It is, then, the confusion of two different laws, the putting forth of pretensions in the name of the one which are only justified in virtue of the other, that has the unhappy effect of causing both directors and directed to forget that sacred and intimate and all-pervasive spiritual life for the sake of which alone departmental religion exists. The natural tendency of the specialist to be exorbitant combines with the natural tendency of most men to be indolent, and issues in the result that a limited and external religion becomes all in all, and the spirit is partially extinguished. Then, since the idea still survives that religion should be supreme and paramount, this, its closely defined presentment, is superimposed on all other duties and interests of life, to their manifest inconvenience as well as its own dishonour. And all this has been brought about by want of detachment on the part of the ruler, and by selfish indifference on the part of the subject.

We come back, then, to the solemn and, alas!

sometimes unwelcome truth, that the greater things of life cannot be done for us, but must be done by ourselves. We may leave the technical details to departmental experts, but the summing up of all the various interests into one whole, the subordination of the lesser to the greater, of the passing to the permanent, must be done by ourselves. We must render to Pope and Cæsar that which belongs to Pope and Cæsar, but to God and our own soul that which is their due.

BEFORE AND AFTER CONVERSION[1]

IT is instructive to see what a very different view is taken by the ordinary religious teacher of the temper of mind of the convert before and after his reception into the Church. It is taken for granted that a spirit of inquiry, a restless, eager, unsatisfied temperament becomes the heretic, the unbeliever, on his way to the Church, but is simply pernicious when he finds himself therein. Curiosity and open-mindedness before, docility and blind obedience after; truth the first object of our efforts, orthodoxy the second and last.

But can this be a just and complete view of the case, or even a practical one? Can a man leave all his characteristics behind him at the Church door, and, even if he could, would it be right to ask it of him? Is there, indeed, no work within the Church for those highly-tempered

[1] The greater part of this essay appeared in the *Weekly Register* of April 12th, 1901, under the title "Inquiry and Belief."

souls, that fought their way in by the loyal pursuit of truth at all risks, by the generous sacrifice of cherished traditions that stood in the way of fuller light, by their diffidence in mere personal opinions, and their readiness to learn from others, even those most opposed to themselves? Is that noble disquiet, so vitally necessary during the process, to be entirely stifled when the great step has been taken? Are we to open wide the door of the ark to those who seek admission, and close the very portholes and windows once they are in?

It is difficult, for example, to study such a life as that of Pusey without acknowledging that those very characteristics which prevented him from ever becoming a Catholic would have made him, in the eyes of many, the very model of what the faithful should be, had he been born within, instead of without, the pale of the Church. His faith would never have been troubled by an objection nor disturbed by a struggle. He would have been a good Catholic, for the very reason that he remained a good Anglican. Is not this somewhat perplexing? And his dealings with his followers, who were tempted to consider the claims of Rome, how curiously like the methods that are adopted

amongst ourselves when difficulties arise. To use his own words :—

"I found it most expedient to seek whether the first doubts were not the result of some irregularity : whether, for example, those in question had not exposed themselves to influences not intended by God, such as visiting Catholic convents, assisting, from curiosity, at Romish functions, attempting an impossible comparison of the different branches of the Church, or undertaking controversies beyond their strength. . . . I usually found that many, in such cases, would date their first desire to leave the Church from some personal fault."

In what other manner do Catholic directors ordinarily proceed, and in many cases most wisely ? "You are not sure whether the foundations are secure, whether the Church is built on rock or on the shifting sand of the shore. Well, do not look out of the window at all, and your doubts will vanish. Admire the beautiful architecture within, look at the pictures and statues, and you will forget all about the foundations." And if it be urged, on the other hand, "But the very arches seem to me to be rocking, and how can I help fearing that the building will collapse ?" then the answer will be : "It is not

the pillars, but your head that is rocking; shut your eyes and keep quiet till the giddiness has passed."

This was Pusey's answer to his penitents; and this is the answer of many Catholic directors also, but it is, unfortunately, not an irresistible answer, since it rather stills than satisfies the actual difficulty. It is, perhaps, a necessary treatment when the mind is too perturbed to judge matters sanely; but we must frankly face the objection that the best of those who enter the Church do so precisely because they have not accepted it in their own case.

What, then, is to be the answer to this apparent contradiction? Is the temper of mind that was best for finding the truth not also the best for keeping and developing it? Is this noblest of qualities, this heroic love of truth, not to find a congenial soil in the Church of God? Is it to be mental activity before, stagnation after?

Surely the right and wrong of this kind of direction can only be apportioned by one who carefully distinguishes between two kinds of mind in the inquiry. There is the mind which has taken its difficulties, receptively, from without; there is the mind which has generated

them, actively, from within. To the former the advice given will often be wholesome and necessary, and will, in fact, be an invitation to throw themselves back, not only on authority, but also on conscience; to cease from looking without and listen to the voice within.

It may be that such as these, who would never have been troubled save for what others have said to them, will not be able to work their way through the difficulties which their own mind never suggested. Not that they should be deprived of the rights of autonomy, their own conscience must still guide them in the acceptance and following out of that which is given them; the weakest, as the wisest, must find themselves alone in the last court of appeal. But it may be that, in these difficulties, which have come by way of suggestion and not by way of generation, they will find little help in their own resources, and will have to lean almost entirely on that spiritual authority which conscience teaches them to obey.

But, with the other class of mind, the remedy should be as different as the disease. Such as these will often be most troubled in faith when they are amidst the surroundings which should, seemingly, be most helpful to it. Their diffi-

culties arise from keen interest and activity, not from curiosity or passivity. The worst that can be done for them is to teach them to distrust themselves, to fear that the light which they follow will lead them into darkness.

This kind of independence is totally different from mere subjectivism. We are not inviting such souls to rely on themselves as though nothing were to be gained from outside. The difference between this and the former class is not in the need either has to appropriate the truth which is greater than self, but in the method of appropriation. In the former this method is more passive ; in the latter, more wholly active.

Many suffer a great part of their lives from having been afraid of their own minds. This fear keeps them chained to the same habits and customs from first to last, a course which results in monotony, weariness, and a kind of half certainty which is almost more deadly than doubt. Had they ever dared to push their difficulties as far as they would go, they would have found that, where the difficulty ends, the solution begins. To think what seems to us true, to do what seems to us right, cannot lead us astray, if truth and conscience be facts at all. To doubt

ourselves is, in certain cases, to doubt God and the teachers He has sent us.

We must admit then that, for some souls, the time after conversion will not necessarily be easier than the time before. Those who were open-minded enough to find their way into the Church will frequently be those who have also the hardest struggle to remain within her. Their difficulties will be too fundamental to meet with an easy answer, and we know, from their past, that mere considerations of peace and quiet will not avail to hold them ; they have sacrificed their comfort once, and would do so again. And yet we would not admit that they are to be for ever tossed on the waves of doubt and uncertainty. Slowly, but surely, they will settle down into the possession of certain inalienable truths. Some for one reason, some for another, will feel that the Church alone preserves for them those truths and means of grace which they most clearly need. To some difficulties the answer will come at last, luminous and evident ; for others, such a final solution may never be found. But, when no more definite answer is forthcoming, there is one, with Gospel precedent, which may avail. And this answer is expressed in another question, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Were

there, in such moments of trial, any other salvation in sight, as there was when they entered the Church, then there would be justification for more than mere inquiry and examination ; the difficulties might grow to doubts, and the doubts to a definite change of conviction. But, unless such be the case, they have the best of reasons for staying where they are.

To whom shall they go ? Is there any teacher, any teaching, that can offer clearer light, fuller means of grace and holiness ? Would the next step be, like the last, one towards greater strength and completion, or towards weakening and disintegration ? Will it lead higher or lower—to more faith and holiness, or to less ? And on the answer to these questions will most rightly depend the consequent action.

Those who are but half convinced of the true claims of the Bride of Christ may tremble as to the outcome of the choice, and may endeavour to silence the inquiry ; but those of stronger faith will await the result in calm and confidence.

UNDERGROUND FORCES[1]

FOUNDERS of religious orders were wont to speak in modest terms of the work it had been given them to accomplish. St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius of Loyola, cannot be accused of boasting, in regard to that church within a church which they hoped to leave behind them. Whether or no they foresaw the spreading tree which was to grow from the acorn they had planted and tended, it was to them no source of pride and glorification ; they rejoiced to speak of the congregation they were forming as of the least, the lowest, the most insignificant of like creations.

We will not misjudge the Saints by ascribing their words to that false humility which leads men to deny the value of their own work ; hence we will rather suppose that in this, as in all creative, or, better still, generative work, there is a sense of dependence as well as force ; the seed can be sown, but what will the earth make

[1] The substance of this essay appeared in the *Weekly Register* of March 14th, 1902, under the title of "Alma Mater."

of it? The grain is cast into the minds and hearts of men, but on their responsiveness will it depend whether or no it unfold its latent power. Truly no one can thus generate whatsoever it may be without an overwhelming sense of the complex and eternal possibilities by which we are surrounded, and where is the fool that will boast of the child that is begotten but not yet born? Herein is truly the distinction between creation and generation; the former a self-sufficing faculty, the latter dependent on responsive conditions.

In this trait of diffidence and humility it cannot be said that the founder has generally been imitated by his followers. To them his modesty is justified, not by the material facts of the case, not by the imperfection of the work he accomplished, or his dependence on forces which he could not control, but only by his intense conviction that he was an instrument of God and not an independent factor. So that, in reality, they manage, unconsciously, to find in the very humility of their founder a motive for the greater glorification of his work: *it was the work of God and not of man.*

That every great spiritual worker has indeed this sense of dependence on the one great Worker

and Maker of all things is undeniable ; and we may well admit that it is one of the reasons for his modesty and selflessness. But we would nevertheless insist also on that other motive which we have already indicated ; a motive which should influence the attitude of disciple as well as master.

But this will only be in so far as the disciples are not merely taking over what their teacher left them, but are actively carrying on his work by their own efforts, and this is, unfortunately, never the case with more than a small proportion of the followers. For the greater number what was, in him, the formative, incomplete element has become the formed and finished production. Too few are those who feel, in all spiritual gifts, a continual call on their own responsiveness, who regard a *vocation* as an everlasting word, a continual summons, not a voice that sounds for a while and dies away into silence. The generality accept what is given them as an accomplished fact, and would consider it disrespect to their founder to question the completeness and perfection of his work. They are willing to make even too full profession of individual lowliness (too full, because individual activity is dependent on a sense of individual worth) ; but the Body

to which they belong is, in their eyes, a wholly great and glorious thing ; nor are they prepared to admit that, if living at all, it must still partake of the imperfections, as of the possibilities, of its earlier seed existence.

Those, on the contrary, who are active furtherers, and not mere passive imitators, of the work of their founder, will share his diffidence, we might even say his discontent, in a way that is almost scandalous to their weaker brethren. They, too, are conscious of eternal possibilities and eternal impossibilities, of what may be and ought to be, and yet, perhaps, never will be. But, if they dare to say only a part of what they feel, they will seem, not fervent and devoted, but captious and disloyal. And so they work, for the most part, in silence, unless, from time to time, their turn comes round, when those who generally speak are glad to hold their peace.

The Founder, supreme above all founders, Who sowed the grain of that spiritual institution which was to embrace all others and cover the face of the earth, was, in a certain sense, like to other religious founders, in so far as He had laid aside His creative prerogative, and was generating that which would need a responsive element. He was sowing the seed which was to be received

later into the heart of the Church and to make her His Spouse and the Mother of all nations. It was a seed that contained infinite and eternal possibilities, but it was to follow the law of earthly generation, and to be developed in dependence upon the soil into which it was cast. He too, then, could speak of the *pusillus grex* of His followers, surrounded by a mighty world; and His Apostle could echo His words when he said that, in that early Church, there were "not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble." But, like the members of the religious orders aforesaid, so too the members of Christ's Church think it not loyal or fitting to speak in lowly terms of the great Body to which they belong, but would publish the glories of their Mother in the face of an unbelieving world, and, not satisfied with proclaiming their faith in her spiritual possibilities, and her heavenly birth and destiny, would prove, against St. Paul, that she does indeed contain within her the wise and the noble and the great and the powerful, not only according to the spirit, but also according to the flesh.

But now again, as in the previous instance, a note of mourning may be heard from those who

venture on no articulated complaint. Is the Church less to them, or more, because they do not join in that chorus of unqualified praise? Is their loyalty questionable because they find the work of their Master largely frustrated in its actual results? Is there no sense in which they may, without suspicion of faithlessness or distrust, revert to the lowlier expressions of Christ and His Apostles, who contemplated that tiny grain and measured its chances of growth and development in a world compounded of so many contrary elements?

There are two ways of estimating any spiritual force; we may look to what it has already achieved, or what it has still to accomplish; to its actualities or its possibilities. In the Church the first represents that definite and limited response which humanity has made to the Word of Christ. Here is something finished, in so far as it represents the seed which has not only been sown, but has also borne fruit. The second represents that seed itself, containing unlimited possibilities, but still dependent on mother earth for the actuation and development of these possibilities. It was not by reason of the inherent imperfections of this seed that Christ and His Apostles spoke of it in humble, lowly terms,

but because of its dependence on the earth of humanity for the production of that fruit which would always be qualified by the defects of the soil into which it was cast. The seed itself would be hidden and lost, and only its imperfect fruits could testify to its presence.

It is in this sense that the very Church can speak of herself in terms of humility. She is glorious by reason of the seed which she bears within her ; she is lowly by reason of the imperfection of her own response. She can boast, with the deacon Lawrence, of her rags and poverty, only because they cover this hidden treasure of endless possibilities.

Too often her less enlightened children glory in that which is least, in the visible work which can be laid forth for the world's inspection. But, in fact, it is her poor and her weak and her beggars that appear on her surface in the sight of all mankind ; the spiritually rich and noble and powerful are hidden within her, working out her destiny as the seed works in the dark, damp earth. From within these obscure caverns resounds faintly the *gemitus compeditorum*, the cry of the Church's martyrs ; martyrs not to her enemies, but to herself—the strong who are bound for the sake of the weak—whose light and force

are ministering to their sustenance whilst they themselves may not emerge to the surface, lest for their meat the weak brother should perish for whom Christ died.

In every living organism the greater and the nobler part lies hidden beneath the workaday surface. In moments of crisis, of danger, of suffering, of death, it emerges, like the fire from an apparently extinct volcano, or the water from a hidden spring. Then we know what it was that warmed the earth above and kept it green. And we have learned from modern psychology that there are hidden corners of life and memory which we cannot reach of ourselves, but which another can reach by hypnotic force. So, too, in the Church, there are forces she cannot of herself reveal, but which emerge in a crisis, or under the Hand of God, the great Mesmerist. Then those that were working silently underground come forth to the light with that which they have accomplished ; or receive, too late for their consolation in this life, the acknowledgment of what they have done, while the seed continues to work below in the dark and stillness, preparing fresh manifestations for a future day. And thus again and again the mistake is reiterated, and we boast of that which has been done, instead of

resting our hopes in that hidden glory which is yet to be revealed. Truly the groan of the captives must be an everlasting constituent of the harmony of the Church on earth.

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL[1]

IN his masterly work, *Catholicism and the Twentieth Century*, Dr. Albert Ehrhard concludes with an invitation to the world of modern thinkers on the one hand, and to Catholics on the other, to enter seriously on the question, not of compromise, but of mutual conciliation. If the condition of the Church in the Middle Ages was, as he shows us, a stage in her evolution, but not a necessary or permanent one, neither is the present position one that can be regarded as finally satisfactory. However useful opposition may be to the development of the muscles, whether of soul or body, the merely pugilistic gain must surely be outweighed by the corresponding disadvantages when our best efforts are called forth to the destruction of something really useful and necessary.

[1] The substance of this article, under the same title, appeared in the *Monthly Register* of September, 1902, on the occasion of the appearance of Dr. Ehrhard's work, *Katholicismus und der Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*.

To some natures it may appear that the true Gospel spirit is one of pronounced antagonism to the world, with all its works and pomps. This world they regard as the enemy of God, bearing constantly aloft the standard of revolt, and inculcating the principles of time as opposed to those of eternity. They forget that the "world" thus conceived is, as Dr. Ehrhard tells us, in the Church as well as outside her, that it is an influence, a spirit, not a compact mass of men and women; that it cannot be measured out and located, but is diffused unequally in the most varied places. Because, in certain classes of men, this spirit more widely prevails, it is a mistake to regard it as personified in them and them alone. Nay, more, not only is the "world" not restricted to a certain class of men, but these same men are not restricted to the "world," are not to be regarded as worldly and nothing else. They may have religion mingled with their worldliness, just as their opponents have worldliness mingled with their religion; the division is in no case clear and defined.

But it is not only Catholics who fall into this error of over-rigid classification. The scientific and philosophical thinkers of the day equally fail to realize that there is a certain amount of religion

on their side, however little it may be openly recognized, just as there is also a good deal of the best and the worst of their own spirit in the opposite camp. Neither in a good nor in a bad sense are the qualities, characteristic of either side, strictly confined thereto, and both parties will have, sooner or later, to reckon with the neglected elements of their own composition. "Mere denial will not extinguish us," says Dr. Ehrhard; "this could only be done by the spiritual, ethical, and religious conquest of Catholicism."

This is to say that every power must be, at last, fought on its own ground, whereon alone it can be vanquished. If the result of persecution be so often an increase of strength to the persecuted, this is not only because the latter have been purified by suffering and tribulation, but because their enemies have made a confession of weakness by merely raising the arm of oppression. To persecute is to attempt to crush, not a spiritual force, but its material manifestations; to destroy, not the sources of its activity, but the channels through which it is externalized. The result, therefore, is to concentrate physical force on the one side as against spiritual force on the other; a division which is bound to lead to a reaction, in which the persecuted side will

enter again with interest into the goods of which it has been deprived. Thus, as we witness the scenes now being enacted on the other side of the Channel,[1] we know that any repression of spiritual life which is worked by material measures must inevitably bring round its own defeat—that no religion, as such, can be thrust out by worldly force, but only by a higher religion—that secular teaching can oust religious education only by absorbing its higher elements, not by suppressing them with the might of the State. "The enemies of a man are those of his own household"—such attempts as these will be foiled, not so much by the virtue of the other side, as by the latent virtue and religion of the persecutors themselves. Our author has well understood this in his appeal to the antagonists of the Church to reconsider their action, and this in the highest interests of their own cause. What use were there in such a summons unless we believed in the existence of friendly elements in the opposing camp—unless we knew that they were fighting for us as well as against us?

But Dr. Ehrhard turns next to Catholics with

[1] This remark referred, not to the law of separation, but to the special legislation concerning religious congregations and confessional works.

a like invitation. Sympathy and conciliation are not to be looked for on one side only, but on both. If the modern world is to recognize the insufficiency of its own ideals, so are Catholics to acknowledge the imperfection of many temporary phases in the history of the Church.

> No period of the activity of the Church [he writes] can make claim to represent the realization of her complete ideal. The perfect Church, without stain or blemish, is the completed Church of hereafter. The Church upon earth is militant, not only because she has to fight with external enemies, but because she has to oppose those defects which make themselves felt in her own members, whatever position they may occupy. We must therefore carefully distinguish between the ideals of the Catholic Church and their actual realization at any specified period (pp. 368–9).

Now as we are told that the history of the race is to some extent reproduced in the individual, so may we say that the vicissitudes of the Church are reflected in each single soul. Thus are we all subject to the opposing influences of light and darkness, eternity and time ; and the duty of leavening, of illuminating, of placing the candle in a candlestick and not under a bushel, applies to the struggle of good and evil within us, as well as to our personal duty in regard to the rest of mankind. In this way we

understand better our part as Catholics towards the world. We are to find in it fellow-fighters, and not enemies ; the warfare which is to end in their camp is to begin in our own ; and we help on the victory of the eternal in others in so far as we have learned the necessity of struggling for it ourselves. We shall edify in proportion as we contrive to be edified, and we shall impart of our own riches in so far as we are able and willing to appropriate those of others.

But here a difficulty arises which Dr. Ehrhard has not overlooked, though he has perhaps failed to give it all the weight it possesses. The claim of religion is to deal with the ultimate and, in a sense, the only necessities of life. But how can there be any fundamental sympathy between those who take this world as containing all that we can desire or live for, and those who look on it as a mere passage to eternity ?

I will not deny [says the author] that the intense and predominant interest of Catholicism in the *unum necessarium*, in the work of personal salvation, has contributed to the withdrawal of Catholics from merely temporary and earthly labour. But this motive has been falsely regarded as the chief or only one, since it was never of universal importance, being confined to deeply religious natures. For the rest, its weight cannot be denied ; so long as the Divine word lasts : " What doth it profit a

man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" the cause of salvation remains supreme amongst all earthly ambitions and intellectual joys. But since it is the ideal of Catholicism to blend into one harmonious whole the here and the hereafter, culture and religion, work and prayer, religion cannot hinder a Catholic from an active share in the task of earthly and human culture (pp. 398–9).

And yet is this, in point of fact, quite easy of accomplishment? Can the man who, in a greater or lesser degree, beholds all things *sub specie aeternitatis*, really compete in worldly efficiency with him who finds his all in the actual present? To the one the world is an end, to the other it is but a means. Can such a difference of estimate fail to have a corresponding influence on each one's measure of success?

From the animal kingdom upwards it would seem as though every society could distinguish those who belonged to it in fact and feeling, from those who merely joined themselves to it for convenience or any other motive. As the bird or beast which betrays any peculiarities is pecked to death, or otherwise destroyed by its companions, so, in human society, woe to him who adjoins himself to any special clique or association without belonging to it inwardly as well as outwardly. It has often been a subject

of perplexity to discover what it is that constitutes the secret of success in certain most frivolous and worldly circles of society—circles that glory in their exclusiveness, that make no attempt to conceal their own utter rottenness, and that are still looked to with envy and longing by many who cannot break into the magic ring, and yet possess at least as many recommendations as those within it. The secret probably lies in the simple fact that, to belong to certain associations, one must seek membership, not from ambition or any extraneous motive, but from actual kinship in thought and feeling. The captive bird who is released in the woods, and at once pecked to death by his wild companions, has lost the sympathies of taste and habit which made him one with them, and falls a victim to his own intrinsic dissimilarity.

Is not this somewhat the case with the man of religious mind when brought into contact with the world? He may apply himself with all possible energy to the task of the day, even should that task consist in what he would regard as mere amusement. He may earnestly strive to further the material progress of the race, but his companions will, all the while, know that he is looking to one end and they to another,

and this member of a heavenly society will be to them something like the beast that has been thrust forth to dwell with the wild denizens of the forest. He reminds us of the Lazarus whom Browning describes, a man gifted with a sense of the beyond which unfits him for the here and now :—

> Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
> Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> He holds on firmly to some thread of life
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Which runs across some vast distracting orb
> Of glory on either side that meagre thread,
> Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—
> The spiritual life around the earthly life :
> The law of that is known to him as this,
> His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.[1]

It seems hardly enough to say that such cases are rare : that the deeply religious mind is but an occasional visitant, while the ranks of every church are filled with those not troubled with too keen a sense of ultimate spiritual realities. However true this may be in fact, we cannot admit that it is an ideal condition of things, nor deny that it is the task of the Church to

[1] *Epistle of Karshish.*

increase, as far as possible, the number of those very men whom we would then give up as impossible members of society. However necessary at the time, this was surely one of the defects of the Middle Ages, which we would not desire to carry on or revive. Great as may be the part which the monastic life has yet to play in the history of the Church, we are surely not willing to regard it any longer, like our ancestors in the Middle Ages, as a necessary refuge for those who would wish to serve God with purity and intensity. It may be and will be chosen, in some form or other, to the end of the world as a *helpful* means of salvation, but it must surely not be taken as a necessary one. How then are we to meet the difficulty of blending together, in the tasks of daily life, those who live for this world and those who live for the next?

Here we seem to end in a hopeless *impasse* unless we recognize frankly that there *is* a sense in which the world must always get the better of the Church, in so far as those weighted with eternity cannot be as successful in things of time as the lighter unburdened souls that pass gaily from flower to flower on the road of life. This apparent inferiority is not confined to the religious as opposed to the worldly mind, but is

the lot of the *worker*, as opposed to the mere *dilettante*, in purely secular subjects also. There is a sobering, ageing effect in real work, as opposed to superficial occupation, which must be accepted as inevitable, even if it cannot be regarded as agreeable. The man who knows but little and "thinks perhaps even less," has often more to say for himself about that little than the one to whom a trivial question raises a complicated problem. Hence there is a sense in which "the world" must be honestly accepted as a stranger, if not an enemy, to the thoughtful as well as to the religious mind.

> The humble servant of a heavenly patria, of an unfathomable truth [writes Mrs. Humphry Ward] is no match for these intellectual soldiers of fortune. He does not judge them; he often feels towards them a strange forbearance. But he would sooner die than change parts.[1]

We must also be prepared to admit that, if the Church can take her full share in the culture and progress of the modern world, it is not by appropriating to herself the material elements of that same culture and directing them to a spiritual end, but by entering into and appropriating its eternal and spiritual elements. Dr. Ehrhard

[1] *Eleanor.*

distinguishes *civilization* from *culture*, the former directed to the improvement of merely material existence, the latter to the development of the highest capacities of mankind. The world can advance in civilization without the aid of the Church, but the best fruits of culture are unattainable without the co-operation of religion (p. 363).

It is not, therefore, necessary for the most zealous apologist of the Church to prove that she has had her share in every development of domestic comfort, or every extension of the railway system. Neither need we, like certain zealous journalists, anxiously scan the lists of those distinguished in the Army, or the Navy, or at the Bar, and count our spoils in the Catholic interest. All this may be useful from a statistical point of view, but does not touch the vital question. What is truly essential is that the Church should know how to receive and absorb and direct that swelling tide of thought and action which raises creation to God as she, in a sense, brings God to creation. Her part in life, like that of her children, is rather directive than creative. We are none of us responsible so much for what we have as for what we do with it. The great forces of life flow through us in a greater or

lesser measure : we cannot create the flood, but we can control it. The Church is distinguished from the world by her final principle and test and standard to which all the rest is referred, but her spiritual life will be fuller in proportion as she absorbs more of the wealth of nature and all mankind.

The world and the Church must, then, remain forever, in a certain sense, in conflict, and this conflict may be as wholesome as it is necessary. But the injury to either side arises when this side strives to be foremost in that which is not of its proper domain, for then to win in appearance is to be defeated in reality. The true and legitimate conflict is that in which it is as good to be conquered as to conquer, because thus the conquered has been made to absorb that which the conqueror had to impart. This is the case in the warfare between culture and religion when either absorbs the eternal elements of the other, and when victory, on either side, results in a fuller sympathy and union. Spiritual battles are all to the good, for that which is immortal can neither be wounded nor die ; only by foreign and extraneous elements can it be corrupted and destroyed. It would be monstrous to settle political disputes by a boxing-match between the

Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition ; and so, in these more lasting disputes, is it a perversion when the Church or the world endeavours to settle the question by a recurrence to foreign aid. The world which can fight with sword and fire is the world which can never injure the Church, because it cannot touch her ; but so too the Church that uses measures of violence or aims at earthly success is bound to be defeated, for she is inferior to the world in the world's own domain. There the best of her children will be often the least successful ; for their very constitution unfits them for a certain kind of battle. But in the higher sphere, where the spiritual interests of both sides meet and conflict, in order finally to blend and unite, he who is greatest in the kingdom of God may likewise be greatest in the kingdom of the world, for in both he seeks the eternal, and represents the highest and most lasting interests.

MINORITIES

STRANGE that it should have been a "liberal" minister[1] who lately announced, as an acceptable doctrine, a commendable fact, that "it is the fate of minorities to suffer." The statement, in itself, is as true as it is depressing; but, for those whose avowed aim is the promotion of liberty, to utter such a maxim with approval is to renounce the end under pretext of advancing it.

But perhaps the modern liberal of a certain school, if asked to specify the chief aim of his party, would not define it as the pursuit of liberty, but, adopting the well-known catchword, would say that he sought "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." If this were an adequate description of the aim of the "liberal" party, then that aim would be perfectly consistent with the policy of abandoning minorities to their natural fate; it would indeed, in every choice of action, become simply a question of

[1] Mr. Augustine Birrell.

statistics and numbers; if twelve men wanted one thing, and only ten another, then a "liberal" government would, as a matter of course, further the wishes of the former; they would be, in plain words, not only the representatives, but even the delegates of the majority.

It is astonishing that the history of the past should leave so little impression. The "Kingdom of God," understood in that sense in which even the Positivist will admit of it, has ever been a grain of mustard seed in its beginnings; from a minority all that is best in the world has originally sprung. Intellectual, moral, æsthetic good, in its highest form, is ever at first the possession of a few, and by those few is imparted to the many. And, to pass from collective to individual instances, what is the history of the development of every noble personality but the history of the gradual ascendency of a minority—a minority of the spiritual, self-determining elements over the earthly, determistic, fateful majority of custom and inclination and passion?

Now in questions which can be decided by votes and representation it is obvious that the force of numbers must prevail. But this only shows how important it is to keep distinct and

separate those matters which ought to be subjected to such a test, and those which ought not. Human life is so constituted that, in many cases, one class cannot benefit without another suffering loss. Certain goods are limited, and divisible only according to quantity ; hence while one has more another has less, while one has everything another has nothing. But if, even in material things, the object of every just government should be to protect the weak and the few as far as possible, how much more should it guard against every intrusion of this law of numbers into regions of life wherein it is not intended to prevail ? If a minority must sometimes renounce their right in material things because the question has to be decided in one way or another, and cannot be decided to the advantage of both sides, we surely do not want the same method of procedure adopted in matters wherein each one's right is sacred and inalienable, and the good of one cannot possibly conflict with the good of another. The ballot is an excellent institution, but must be kept strictly to its own domain.

What, however, is its domain ? This is a question not easily decided, given the complex interaction of material and spiritual interests.

But if we cannot be sure on some points we can on others; there are realms of life which are obviously above and beyond the criterion of numbers and majorities. Religion cannot be subjected to such a criterion, nor can truth, nor can even conduct, considered under its more spiritual aspect.

In a book which, with some faults of passion and prejudice, should never be wholly disregarded nor forgotten, in the *Letters of Quirinus*, with their remarks on certain features of the Vatican Council, the strongest point is their indictment of the principle of suffrage as adopted for the establishment of a truth. If such a principle would be inapplicable to the pursuit of scientific truth, how much more so to that of a truth which is philosophical or religious? To decide a truth by suffrage is like solving a problem by casting lots, and wherever such a method obtains—and there are many other examples than that which Quirinus gives us, among unbelievers as well as believers — we may say that the spirit of coercion prevails. When force, of whatsoever kind, is employed by the majority to stifle opinions held by a minority, there the same fallacy is, consciously or unconsciously, cherished; *there truth is being*

made the matter of a vote. That such a course should ever be pursued in the name of liberty is only possible by reason of the tyranny of that catchword we have cited; by supposing that liberty can be identified with "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."

But how can the happiness of the majority ever be rightly grounded on the unhappiness or suppression of the minority? Fewness of number does not imply weakness of right, and no country or State or institution or Church can be termed *free* if it hold one single slave. Would England boast that she was a free country if one —only one—of her children were immured in an iron cage and deprived of his liberty, not for any crime, but simply for the good pleasure of the rest? Such a man would be a slave, and wherever one slave exists there *slavery* exists, though the free and the enslaved should be in the proportion of a million to one.

Therefore, whensoever things which cannot be arithmetically divided are subjected to the laws of arithmetic; when personal and spiritual goods are seized by public force; when any battle is decided, not by the pure pre-eminence of one of the contending powers, but by the mere brute predominance of one side over another; then

liberty is outraged in its most essential characteristics, and all the conceivable happiness of ever so great a number will not remove the stain of tyranny and oppression from such an action. The minority has been coerced and enslaved in matters wherein the rights of the few are as sacred as the rights of the many, and the system according to which this can be done is not a system of freedom.

But if the opinions of a minority are positively distasteful to the rest of the community, have they no means of overruling them? Yes, they may do all they can, provided they employ the legitimate weapons. They must meet thought by thought, learning by learning, devotion to one cause by still greater devotion to another. If in this way they prevail they have prevailed lawfully, and if they fail they will gain by their defeat, as much as they could have gained by their victory.

As we have said elsewhere, in intellectual warfare it is as good to be conquered as to conquer, for the conquered thus receive what the conqueror has to impart. And if the minority perish because they cannot qualify or adapt themselves to their environment, then they have perished rightly and not wrongfully, and they

have perished for good and all. But if they are merely stifled by material force, then, though they seem to die, they yet live, and will come again with retribution in their hands.

An enlightened government, whether civil or ecclesiastical, will therefore treat a minority in one of two ways: it will incorporate its views, or it will simply tolerate them and leave them to grow strong or to perish according to their own native strength. The former of these methods is not always possible, for frequently neither the government nor the majority will understand what it is with which they have to deal. They do not know what is to come of the infant force which they behold at work, but neither do we know what is to come of the infant child we foster and cherish until it can live its own life and do its own work. But ignorance must not be an excuse for tyranny, and that which cannot yet be amalgamated may grow alongside until its nature and end are discernible. The less we understand the character and possibilities of the seed, the more reverent and careful must we be in our treatment of it, lest we mistake the wheat for the cockle.

"Suffer both to grow until the harvest," for only then can they be truly distinguished. There

are weeds which have come to be cultivated for their own sake, having first been regarded as noxious intruders. Who knows but that, before the end, the tares and the wheat may often have exchanged names?

But, whatsoever the final test may be, of this much we may be certain, it will be a dynamic and not a statical one; it will be of strength and virtue, but not of numbers. It may have numbers also on its side—we hope it will; we think that, in essential spiritual questions, it will—but if truth at last finds its home amongst the majority, it will not have done so by force of mere numbers.

In the individual as in the world, in each single soul as in the living communion of souls, the best seems, at first, the least; that which is ultimately to dominate has but a feeble commencement. Let us reverence the minority in our internal world as in the world at large, for of such is often the Kingdom of Heaven. "Truth is great and shall prevail," but not in virtue of numbers, rather in spite of them.

THE FALLACY OF UNDENOMINATIONALISM

Je ne décide point entre Genève et Rome,
De quelque nom divin que leur parti les nomme
J'ai vu des deux côtés la fourbe et la fureur.

THESE words come from the mouth of one who stands aside from every denomination, and who looks on at their strife and differences from what he regards as a higher standpoint. They express the calm of indifference, the impartiality of one who has no side.

There is something imposing in this cool, passionless attitude, something so superior to the interested struggles of those beneath, that the world is often induced to overestimate the greatness of such men, and to mistake an indifference, which is purely negative, for an all-embracing charity and devotion to truth, which are qualities most strong and positive.

It is undoubtedly more dignified to stand aside from a row, and, so odious have the terms "denomination" and "sect" become, that there

are many to whom such disputes will appear nothing greater nor more important. This is so much the case that even members of one Church or the other will often, like Voltaire, assume the part of disinterested spectators, and treat with philosophic coldness the very points on which the teaching of their Church differs from that of others. And it is still more remarkable that, whereas formerly the great Churches, at least, repudiated the terms *sect* or *denomination* as applied to themselves, even they are now less shy of the appellation. It is not surprising that the Church of England should, as has been pointed out lately in the *Hibbert Journal*,[1] sometimes condescend in the matter when we find even Roman Catholics ready, at times, to adopt the custom ; to acknowledge their Church as one of several and not as *the one*.

To some it will seem that this attitude of indifference, this almost deprecating temper of mind in regard to even the most essential claims of their own Church, is, in religious people, a characteristic wholly satisfactory, a proof of advance in the love of truth as in the spirit of universal charity. And this view will naturally

[1] *Vide* article by Canon Knox Little in July, 1906.

be strengthened by the fact that its most energetic opponents are often not distinguished by either of these characteristics. As contrasted with the bitterness of sects such unsectarianism cannot but appear noble and disinterested.

Now we are all agreed that truth and charity are above anything else; if, therefore, this undenominational attitude be really the product of these two great virtues, there would seem to be little more to be said. But then ought we not to go a little further still, and renounce, even in name, differences which we are no longer prepared to support in reality? If we are not ready to go as far as this, is it not because we do, in our hearts, ascribe greater importance to these differences than, in theory, we admit? so that there may, after all, be a certain inconsistency in our conduct which can perhaps be justified, but which certainly needs to be explained.

Is there not, in fact, often something deceptive in this temper of mind? something akin to the delusiveness of that would-be asceticism, which glorifies coldness and self-concentration of temperament by the name of detachment? We cannot renounce what we do not possess; we cannot be disinterested except in the matter of

real interests ; we cannot be tolerant except we have convictions ; we cannot be detached except we have attachments. The love of truth does not exclude warmth of feeling, and the whole question in regard to such an undenominational temper as we have described is, whether it is the result of *indifference* or of *comprehension ;* whether it is inspired by a real devotion to the truths which it will, nevertheless, not inculcate by coercive methods ; or whether it is simply the result of total scepticism, or even ignorance, in regard to the truths or opinions under discussion.

Now there are truths which are not capable of exciting any passion, but these are not religious truths any more than they are political truths or moral truths. Any truth which has a direct bearing on life, which is not purely scientific or logical, which is a practical and human as opposed to a purely speculative truth, must enlist the heart and the feelings as well as the mind. In religious beliefs and dogmas, if we are concerned with anything at all, we are concerned with truths of vital, and not merely intellectual, import. It is open to us to say that the subject is not worthy of discussion at all, but it is not open to us to say that

such truths can be mere colourless objects of knowledge without appreciable consequences or results.

"I hate," says Goethe, "that which merely instructs me, and does not thereby increase and intensify my activity." With this quotation Nietzsche opens his fine treatise on the advantages and disadvantages of history, in the course of which he has some words on the relations of truth and justice which are singularly appropriate to our topic.

Justice, he tells us, is not a cold and bloodless virtue, but is living and sensitive. The just man loves truth, indeed, but not merely the truth of "cold, ineffective knowledge," but also that which is the "source of order and chastisement"; he devotes his life to the pursuit of truth, but not like those, her so-called servants, who "have neither the will nor the strength to judge," and who desire only that barren and lifeless truth "from which nothing proceeds."

"There are many neutral truths," he says; "there are problems which we can solve without self-conquest, and, still more, without self-sacrifice. In such indifferent and inoffensive matters a man may rightly become a mere spirit of pure knowledge. And yet even should there be, in

exceptional times, whole bands of such learned inquirers, rather minds than men, such times are nevertheless lacking in strong, robust justice, which is the noblest element of truth. . . . For "only the strong can *judge*, it is for the weak to *tolerate*." [1]

So that, to draw our own conclusion, the mere passionless love of theoretical knowledge has nothing to do with the nobler quality of justice; the former is concerned with that side of truth which has no direct bearing on life; the latter regards our attitude towards those truths which are a part of our existence. When our very welfare and happiness depend on the truth being this or being that, then he who can judge, regardless of personal advantage, who can proclaim the truth and proclaim it with all its consequences, who can place falsehood on the left as he places truth on the right, is greater than he who is merely true with the truth of detachment and indifference, for his is a human and positive, a suffering and a conquering truth.

Those who could never rise to the sublime heights of such a justice as Nietzsche describes may still be capable of exercising the milder and

[1] *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie.* F. Nietzsche.

easier virtue of tolerance. For this latter we must simply be devoid of passion ; for the former, passion must be always present, warming and strengthening the sense of truth, but subordinate thereto. Justice is truth triumphant, with its foot upon passion, which is

> Kept quiet, like the snake 'neath Michael's foot,
> Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.

We want to avoid anything that savours of partisanship, but we may pay too high a price for this negative virtue, and there are men who will be something if they are partisans, but who who will be nothing at all if they are merely detached and indifferent. Unless our tolerance be the result of a larger life, of a fuller comprehension, it will denote rather the absence of a certain defect than the possession of special force or virtue. When we hear the members of any great Church almost make it a boast that their end is ever and wholly undenominational, we would withhold our admiration until we understand exactly in what sense their words are to be understood. If their meaning is that they are above the narrowness of mere controversy, that their charity will stretch to every form of human misery, that difference of conviction will not

close their hearts to any who may need their help, that their own faith will never make them crush the beliefs of others, that their apprehension of truth is too spiritual to allow them to regard any presentation of it as final, then, however extended their tolerance may be, it is not inconsistent with the most real love for what they regard as vital truth. But if, on the contrary, their meaning be that they are indulgent because they are not intense, that their beliefs are not sufficiently real and living for them to have even a wish to share them with others, then surely their magnanimity is rather a negative than a positive virtue, and there is no great manifestation of charity in being silent about truths of which they are only half certain.

Nor is this spirit of cold, philosophic detachment to be justified as being the only guarantee against a spirit of coercion and tyranny. There is a surer safeguard of liberty in the principle of autonomy, which is a principle actually essential to the development of that higher form of justice which Nietzsche describes. In proportion to the energy of our own personal efforts after truth will be our readiness to recognize the rights of each mind within its own domain. Believing in the necessity of certain truths to our own life,

truths which we have won and which we maintain in the sweat of the brow, we shall certainly not want to force them on others in a way in which we ourselves could never have accepted them, in a way which would pervert the very nature of the truths themselves. However little we may claim to be unsectarian, in the sense of being detached from any form of religious conviction and mere passionless observers of a war in which we have no part, we can still be so in the nobler sense of a sympathy with every lawful liberty, and with religious liberty above all.

This fallacious form of unsectarianism is part of the more prevailing error, according to which any subject or interest may be widened by addition without expansion. Expansion implies an inner principle of growth ; addition consists in merely external accretions. We are not more large-minded in our religion because we have added thereto many other interests, unless these interests become a living part of our religion. To say, as some do, that though we believe in the soul we will only work for the body, does not make our spiritual philosophy, our doctrine of the soul itself, any broader or more comprehensive. Our large-mindedness in any subject must be proved by our treatment of that

same subject, and not by a simple avoidance of it, however liberal such an avoidance may appear.

We may often come across the workings of the same fallacy in the field of Christian philanthropy; here too breadth is often thought to consist in a variety of foreign accretions, and not in the actual expansiveness of the religious work in question. We remember, for example, a visit to a men's so-called "Catholic Club" in one of the poorer quarters of a great city. There were billiard tables, card tables, a gymnastic apparatus, and a refreshment bar. We observed that the presence of the clergy who accompanied us elicited no more marks of attention than our own. There were no outward signs of religion, Catholic or other; and we found, on indirect inquiry, that a considerable portion of the members were not practising Catholics at all. We could not resist a certain sense of wonder as to why it was called a *Catholic* club, and what was the particular object of its existence. That there might be some very good motive we would not deny; but that motive was, at any rate, not very obvious, and, to the ordinary observer, it was hard to see why it should be a more Catholic act to play billiards with a nominal, or even a

practising Catholic, than with a Protestant or an atheist; why beer and tobacco, or even tea and coffee, were more beneficial to the soul when imbibed under a roof for which the Catholic clergy paid rates and taxes than in any other establishment; and what the statistics of the "Catholic Club" had to do with the statistics of the Catholic Church which adjoined it.

We shall be answered that such a club is run on "large-minded" principles, that the members are not to be tormented with piety, and that the clergy desire to be regarded as cheerful companions in the pursuits of this world, and not as aggressive reminders of our duty to the next. Not finding it easy to play openly their part of spiritual guides and monitors, they will be at least, as an anonymous critic has said, "good fellows, who can kick a football with the best, and not bother men about their immortal souls."

But once more we return to our former point, and ask in what subject or interest this our large-mindedness is exercised. In the club we have described, if religion enter at all it is as an accessory, and not as a qualifying factor of the whole. Religion cannot here be said to characterize the amusements, nor do the amusements

qualify the religion. We are not more liberal and sympathetic in faith and doctrine because we freely encourage games and gymnastics ; nor are we wider and more spiritual in our attitude as to devotions because we simply omit them from our programme. To be, in the true sense, large-minded in religion is to be sympathetic and understanding in our treatment of doubts and difficulties ; to be spiritual in our apprehension of dogma ; to be receptive of any knowledge that can amplify our religious conceptions ; to be generous to honest opposition, pitiful towards the ignorant, and tender to those who sin, whether by transgression or denial. No one can be truly liberal in religion who is not actually religious ; and a Catholic club is not liberal, from a religious point of view, because it is full of everything save Catholic interests, any more than there is religious freedom in the life of a man who never turns his attention to the subject. Political freedom is freedom in one's life as a citizen ; religious freedom is freedom in one's life as a Christian ; a gipsy is not a free citizen, since he is not a citizen at all ; a merely nominal Catholic is not a liberal one, since he has no religious life in which to exercise the freedom of which he boasts. An extension in

the application of the name is not an expansion of the spirit.

We find therefore at last, in this as in most things, that the cheap article is not the real article at all; that to be liberal, in religion as in anything else, we must enlarge our borders, and not merely let our walls and gates decay. To be indifferent is not the same thing as to be tolerant, and if indifference does not hinder the advance of truth, neither will it forward it. To love one friend greatly does not render the heart incapable of loving the rest of mankind; to believe one truth earnestly does not close the mind to others. The true principle of liberality is rather connected with the habit of unification than with that of indifference; in proportion, that is to say, as a nature is one, will its various interests mutually expand one another, and contribute to the enlarging of the whole. Only a living religion is capable of true freedom; a religion that is seated in the centre of the soul and qualifies every other activity thereof. To be undenominational and consequently tolerant is nothing, but to be denominational in the best sense, and likewise tolerant, is much. Just in so far as our religion is a part of our very nature we could never wish to impose it upon others

by intellectual or moral any more than by physical coercion. But this reverence for spiritual liberty is nothing akin to religious indifference; it is, on the contrary, an essential element of our very devotion to truth.

"IL SANTO" AND ANOTHER SAINT[1]

SENATORE FOGAZZARO has been much criticized for his choice of Piero Maironi as the hero of his book, and we may admit that it was a bold venture. Nowadays, when the cry is for biographies of saints without any reference to the miraculous, this writer has not feared to put forward a saint of the medieval type; a saint of extraordinary penance and poverty and abasement; of strange visions and supernatural lights, of miracles, if not in reality, at least in reputation. Piero Maironi has sinned, has lived some short weeks of intense but forbidden joy, has been recalled to God by the example of his dying wife, and has taken refuge in a Benedictine monastery, where we find him, at the commencement of the story, living as a simple labourer, nameless and unknown. The medieval character of the history is preserved in the subsequent events. Rumours of his great holiness

[1] Published in the *Commonwealth* of June, 1906.

have been whispered amongst the people, and, with the prompt exaggeration of the believing but ignorant peasant, have been associated with tales of wonder and miracles. At the same time the guardians of authority have become anxious and suspicious, and Maironi is condemned to leave his monastic home.

We need not relate the various vicissitudes of the drama. Wherever he goes persecution quickly follows, and, hounded from place to place, he dies at last in Rome, where even the protection of the Head of the Church has not altogether availed to defend him from his enemies. On his death-bed he bids farewell to his disciples ; utters the last words of that message which he believed God had given him for mankind ; indeed, as he said once before, "Every one comes into the world with a message imprinted on his soul." He dies in the midst of apparent failure, and we are left wondering what eventually became of the seed he had scattered—a question unanswered even in the history of actual saints, whose works certainly live after them in some best and truest sense, but not always in such manner as we can see and trace.

"Such things are of other times, not of these,"

even pious critics have been heard to say, in condemnation of the bold presentation of this, that we have called a medieval type of sanctity, as contrasted with modern ideas.

No; in all due deference be it answered: *Not* of other times, unless also of our own; and, if never of our own, then never of other times either. If we believe that saints, of the stamp of Piero Maironi, lived and worked and taught a few poor hundred years ago, then let us have the courage of our faith, and believe that they may be among us, or come among us, yet. It is hard to prove the former existence of an extinct type if not even a fossil remain; and it is also hard to see why a spiritual type should become extinct at all. It may be, indeed, that our more critical temper of mind saves us from mistakes to which our forefathers were subject; that we demand more proof of the miraculous and preternatural character of certain signs. But it is not here the miraculous which is chiefly in point. Piero Maironi, without working a single cure, would still belong to that race which some have conveniently relegated to the ages of darkness, believing whatsoever is written of those bygone saints, but utterly incredulous as to the further possibility of such things. Apart from

all miracles, he is the type of those men on whom the eyes of the world have been fixed, as on one descended from another sphere, moving in a world in which he had no part, finding light and strength in a more immediate communication with the Source of all light and strength than is granted to the generality of mankind. He is the type of those who walk no longer whither they will, but are bound and led by another whither they will not or see not. His part is self-abnegation and utter obedience to Divine guidance. Where others have to exercise rather the virtues necessary to honest search after the Divine Will, he has to exercise that of heroic submission to the manifestations of that Divine Will. Men such as these are capable of the marvellous, and of that which would almost seem miraculous, in the way of austerity and labour; this is because they have a stimulus of which we know not; they are impelled by a spiritual force which gives them the strength of passion. Lovers and haters are capable of strange and wonderful deeds; what would be impossible to others is comparatively easy to them, because their one absorbing interest centres all feeling in itself. So too with the Maironi type of saint; he is so intensely

alive on one point that he is comparatively insensible to all others; physical penance, such as would appal most men, is light and congenial to himself. The one real suffering of such natures is desolation, when the breeze drops and the sails hang loose, when they must simply lie low and wait. Not indeed that they are without activity of their own, but it is an activity of response to a consciously experienced impulse; and it is supreme suffering if they cease for a moment to be conscious of this impulse. Then, like Piero Maironi, they blame themselves for some real or supposed infidelity; they have "heard sweet music behind them and have turned to listen, or have lingered to breathe in the fragrance of meadow flowers."[1] "Folly," the world says, and some too who are not of the world. Folly, perhaps—yet it is hard to judge, when we have not the same experience; it is better to withhold our opinion and wait. Music is beautiful, and the scent of the meadows is sweet; yet when men are such that their very bodily senses seem to be absorbed in spiritual things, there may be reasonable grounds for their self-reproach which we cannot estimate.

Wisely then, though boldly, has Senatore

[1] p. 281.

Fogazzaro chosen this man to present to us as "Il Santo," an expression meaning more in the Italian than in our language. Those of us who have been in that country will almost seem to hear the tone of voice in which these words have been uttered by the mouths of an Italian peasant crowd. He would be to them *the* saint, *their* saint, by that instinct of appropriation which makes them, in the book, quarrel for the possession of him in their different villages. He is the saint visible ; an open manifestation of what Divine grace can do.

But, none the less, the author has sketched for us likewise another saint, who walks silently through the same narrative, a saint whose wonders are all within, concealed from the common eye. This is one not habitually swept along by an impulse which makes "every thing that is heavy light" ; he must bring forth, with hard labour, and by his own initiative, that which it is given to the other to perform almost without sense of effort or burden. Giovanni Selva is the apostle of truth as Maironi of love, though indeed this is but an approximate description, since, in the things which occupy these two men, truth and love are inseparable. Selva is an eminent Catholic writer, of deep and wide religious sympathies ;

the type of a noble, self-contained, disinterested, and unworldly personality.

"Son," says the Divine teacher in à Kempis, "walk before Me in truth, and seek Me in simplicity of heart." While deprecating a rigorous application of these two categories, we may apply the first to Giovanni Selva, the second to Piero Maironi, of whom the one serves God by his life of thought, the other by that of action. They are both of them mystics, men of inward life, all their external action springing from an inner source, not following the opposite process. But it is a different kind of inner life in each one; that of Il Santo being fed by inspiration and impulse, that of Selva being more self-evolved and initiatory. God speaks to His servant Maironi; He gives to His servant Selva the power of thinking and speaking himself. This latter has not followed the extraordinary course, he has not committed great sins, nor done great penance, nor received unusual communications. He is frugal and restrained, where Maironi is mortified and ascetic; he loves purely and happily, where Maironi has renounced unlawful passion to deny himself any human attachment whatsoever; he labours mentally in the sweat of his own brow, while Maironi listens

to the words of God ; he works for the cause he has at heart by printed and spoken words—words sometimes understood, sometimes misunderstood; while Maironi magnetically draws men to his side in the strength of that more than human light and love which are felt in his every act and movement.

Selva has the sorrows and the doubts of the lonely. He is one whom none will approach with the offer of help and counsel ; he seems so strong. Yet he has his misgivings like other men ; nay, perhaps more so, for the very independence of his nature leaves him more helpless in moments of doubt and weakness. Who shall dare to break through the barriers of that self-contained nature, and offer the chalice of comfort which is so sorely needed?

"Yes," he said (it was in a conversation with his wife, the only partner of his inner personal life), "I doubt myself. Not in the way that you think, but I ask myself am I merely an *intellectual*, exaggerating the importance of my ideas before God? Do I live those ideas? Do I feel too much indignation against those who do not share them? . . . Do I lead too inactive a life, one that is too easy and pleasant, because study is pleasant to me? . . . You, Mary, you live

your faith. You visit the sick, you work for the poor, you console, you instruct; I do nothing."

These are the familiar doubts of those who work for others by their thoughts rather than their deeds. Nothing to see! nothing to count! how are they to know there is any result when it is all unseen? and Selva shows throughout a pathetic humility and perplexity in watching the course of Maironi's swift mission and destiny. And yet this latter has, in fact, learnt from him, and is passing on the lesson to the rest of the world. In his last moments he asks Selva to stand beside him as he utters his farewell words to his disciples, for, he says, "What I have said and what I am about to say comes from you." Perhaps Selva knew then the secret of his own life, and recognized, for a moment, what his work in the world might be. But, for the most part, just because it was so deep and so far-reaching, its effects must be hidden from himself as well as others. Many indeed would never know from how much he had saved them, just because he had saved them so effectually that they had never even been aware of their danger. It is the part of some to spring into the flood and rescue the drowning; Selva's work would rather have been so to prepare men before-

hand that they would breast the waves of themselves when the moment of peril arrived; the first-named will receive a medal from the Humane Society; men like Selva must wait till later, much later, for their reward, "when the strange and new have birth."

And, to complete the picture, Maironi passes away after two or three crowded years of suffering and work; Selva remains behind: the first is called to a short, intense effort, the second to a prolonged and heavy one. He is to persist in the silent inner work, in the agony of self-begotten thought, in the loneliness and monotony of his unseen life.

Here then are Il Santo and that other saint of whom I wished to speak. There are several distinct lines of interest in this remarkable book; but perhaps no one of them has greater interest and importance than that which we have selected. Both men are saints; both men are mystics; each one feels the other to possess a kind of strength not the same as his own. In Maironi the spirit of Selva seems to have taken flesh and made itself visible to mankind, and it is a hopeless question to ask which man will really have done the greater work. Let us say rather that one does the visible, the other the invisible work

of God ; that one is impelled, the other guided by the Divine Spirit ; that the influence of the one is immediate and evident, that of the other remote and hidden. Maironi is a rarer visitant on earth than Selva, and is received with greater admiration and astonishment ; but the other is not less wonderful because he may be oftener with us. We want both, but Selva is perhaps the more indispensable of the two.

EPILOGUE

THERE are mothers who never allow their children to grow up. Nothing could be more perfect than their management of the nursery, where they can be themselves the utmost bound of their children's horizon; where the all-absorbing maternal instinct, strong in the animal, be it remembered, as well as the spiritual elements, can hold its sway unchecked by any other influence.

But the child changes, and in its heart and mind developments arise, which are not all due to the seed which the parent has planted. And, not in a day, but day by day, there is an ever shifting need for adaptation and adjustment of their mutual relations. Slowly but surely comes a time when father and mother can keep their influence only by ceasing to be the rulers, and becoming the friends of their children. It is a friendship in which a certain superiority will always remain on the side of the parent, a

superiority based on past relations of care and protection; but it is a superiority which will not be damaged by the recognition of another kind of superiority on the other side. The wise father will know when to recognize that his son is stronger than himself, and will lose not an iota of love and respect by doing so. But when this process of adaptation is neglected, when father or mother continue to treat the boy as a baby, the youth as a boy, and the man as a youth, then their relations are liable to end in bitterness and concealed discontent, or in absolute and final severance. They have tried to be to their children what they no longer can, with any profit, be; they have endeavoured to crush the growth of the life they originally fostered; they have made the home a prison by its restraints and regulations. What wonder, then, if their children come to desire the open, to sigh for a land of greater liberty, to fret against those family bonds which have been used as fetters?

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Have our official rulers fallen into the same mistake as regards a world that has grown up and begins to think for itself? Are they afraid

of the best minds amongst their own children? of those to whom the cause of faith is a paramount object of interest, both spiritual and intellectual? Will they not allow any of their children to be helpful friends as well as obedient subjects?

If the Church, like some mercantile corporation, existed for her own sake, and made use of her members for her own ends, then indeed in her official capacity she would have reason for an inquisitorial attitude in their regard; she would be frankly consulting her own interests. But if the Church exist for her children, and not her children for the Church, then why should she ask of them anything but proof that they love and need her? If they gather round the table of her sacraments, if they bow their heads and consciences at her tribunal, if they join in her profession of faith, if they accept their assigned place, whether clerical or lay, in her hierarchy, if they respect her laws, if they love and protect her little ones, if they bear with the defects of her great ones, if they slake their spiritual thirst at her fountains, have they not proved their parentage better than they would do by any wordy adulation of the action of her authorities? "Not every one that

saith to me 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"; the children that please and flatter are not always the most faithful in adversity.

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